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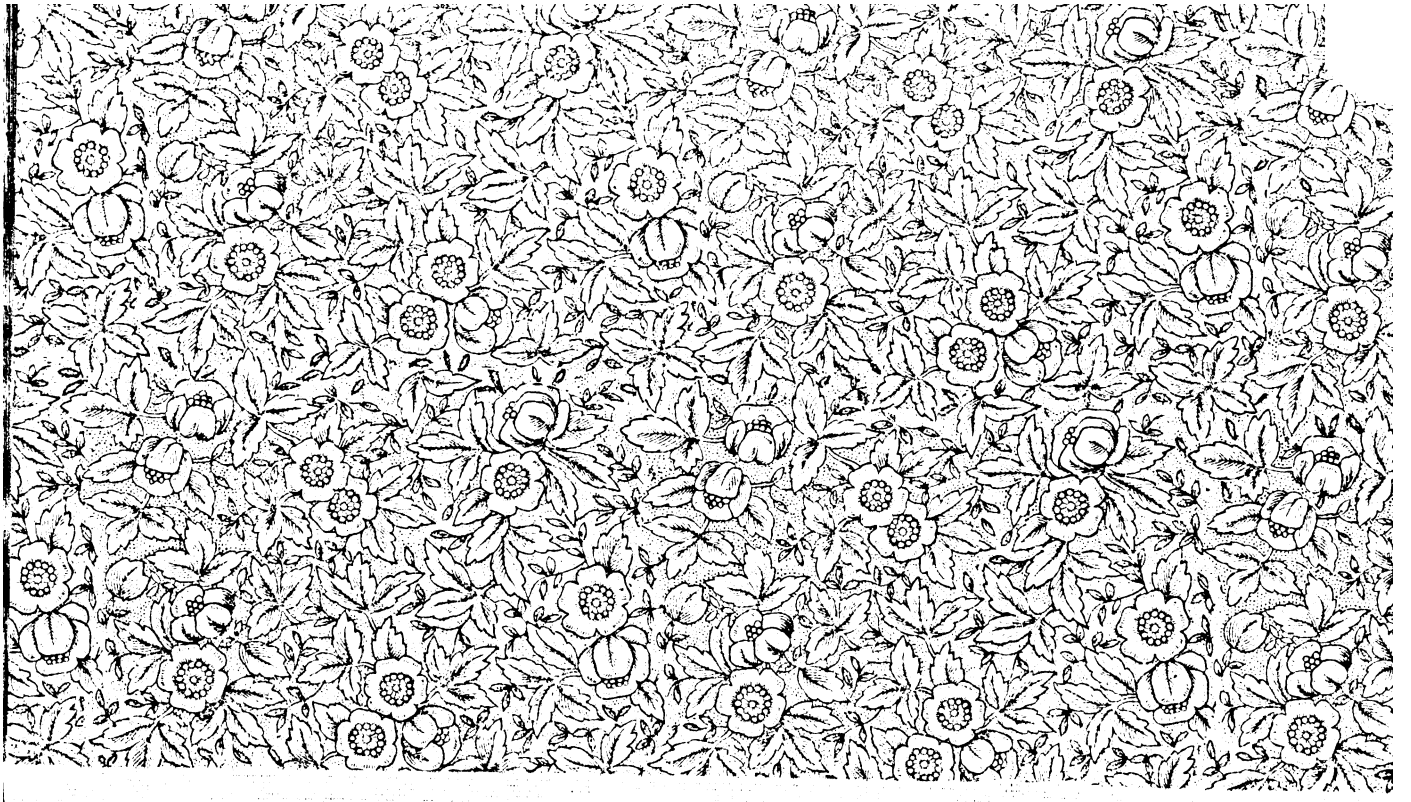

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TRAJAN:

THE HISTORY OF A SENTIMENTAL YOUNG MAN, WITH SOME EPISODES IN THE COMEDY OF MANY LIVES' ERRORS.

A NOVEL

BY

HENRY F. KEENAN

NEW YORK:
CASSELL & COMPANY LIMITED
1885

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TO

MAJOR HENRY A. HUNTINGTON,

OF CHICAGO, ILLINOIS.

In the works of the Queen Anne writers, whom you adore, and whose convivial humanities you have done so much to rescue from forgetfulness,—the dedicatory epistle was not the least of the author's thought. 'Twas meant as the quintessence of the odor and color of the garden—kindly incense of amity and admiration, hinting to the world the originals of the virtues embalmed in the text. If I hint this identification in your case, with whatever may be found admirable in these pages, your own modesty may resent it, but your friends will applaud the indiscretion of embalming some of the traits which endear you to men of gentle mind. While I cannot hope to equal the exquisite wit of the works you have so felicitously commented, I can at least emulate their authors, in the hearty loyalty with which I dedicate this first fruit of literary leisure to you. I have long looked forward to the time when some work of my head and heart should bear your name on the frontispage. It is an amiable vanity, which I hope you will take in good part, and though the pundits you revere put more wit in the ingratiating epigraphs to their patrons, none subscribed their tribute with more hearty affection and admiration than is implied in this long cherished homage of the friend of your youth.

H. F. K.

NEW YORK, Feb., 1885.

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TRAJAN.

CHAPTER I.

VIA DOLOROSA.

WHEN this century, from which—bearing in mind its experience — better things were expected, was at three-score and ten, proving the truth of the adage that there is no fool like an old fool, the events of which these pages are the history came to pass—a time, as you see, within the memory of lads now turning their teens and maids still deep in the plot of that old, old story, always sweetly new! The time was the twelve months between May, 1870, and May, 1871; the place Paris; the personages whose fortunes you are to follow, Americans. The event that linked their destinies—coincident with the prologue of a momentous drama, during whose action the world held its breath. It was mid-afternoon on such a May day as is seen only under Parisian skies. But the invitation of the sky could not alone account for the multitudes thronging the leafy park, the blooming parterres of the gardens and the broad ways of the Champs Élysées. The Court was about to set out for St. Cloud, and the pleasure-loving Parisians were to be treated to a spectacle. Gorgeous lines of soldiery formed in statuesque ranks along the pebbly walks and hot asphalt ways facing the palace. Save for the waving plumes, the glistening wall rested immobile and silent as the granite sphinxes whose solemn eyes blinked sleepily under the ardent sunshine. There was just the perception

of a movement in the shining cuirasses as the swelling notes of a cavalry bugle echoed and re-echoed in sonorous blasts through the crowded aisles of the park and died away far over the turrets of the palace. The refrain was caught up and prolonged by the orchestras shaded in the vernal *allées* of the gardens. The Imperial Guards, flaming in scarlet and glittering casques, formed in serried ranks from the Rivoli gates and the Place du Carrousel to the borders of the Seine. Outriders in the magenta and gold of the line dashed in excited movement along the graveled roadways, adjusting the obstacles for the Imperial advent. Squadrons of the guards formed on each side of the wide way through which the procession was to pass to the Champs Élysées. On a signal from the trumpets, they divided, facing their horses inward and waited immovable as the Egyptian figures at the golden gates. A thin column of smoke curled upward from the Arch of the Carrousel ; a loud crackling detonation of artillery announced that Majesty was about to leave the palace ; another that Majesty was in the vestibule, and the long line of fire made by the red-breeched troopers moved as with one impulse into an attitude of respectful attention.

From the middle porch of the Tuileries, as the guards came to a salute, a short, stout figure, clad in a gentleman's walking dress, appeared, and slowly descended the velvet-carpeted steps. To the salutations of the soldiers and populace he slightly raised his hat, and came downward with a painful and halting step. The crowd in the rear broke into a shout, "*Vive l'Empereur !*" Halting as the lackeys held the door of the landau open, the Emperor half turned. A lady, tall, slight and graceful, appeared in the group at the doorway. She was speaking with animation to the chamberlain, with her face to the multitude. Her eyes were bright, large and of a purplish gray color full of life and vivacity. Her hair, coiled in great masses over a shapely head, shone like burnished copper as the sunbeams fell with coruscating effect upon it. The mouth, long and partly open,

displayed glistening white teeth, and lips, perhaps, a trifle too vermilion—for the lady's age. The heavy droop of the eyelids gave a languorous cast to the otherwise energetic physiognomy. She tripped lightly down the broad steps, a sunshade in her right hand serving as a walking-cane, while in her left she upheld with charming daintiness a robe of silver-gray color. As the outlines of her figure became distinct on the crimson carpet, a tumultuous cry, "*Vive l'Impératrice!*" resounded far back in the shrubberies of the garden. The lady bowed with gracious recognition, and giving a hand to the Emperor, stepped into the landau.

At the same moment a graceful lad of fourteen or fifteen years, mounted on a jet black pony, shot out from the entrance to the Carrousel, and riding close to the carriage, reined in suddenly, and taking off his hat, brought it down to the saddle as he bent to the occupants. The mother smiled fondly as her eye rested on the boy, whose face was a striking counterpart of her own. "*Vive le Prince Impérial!*" acclaimed the crowd, and the Emperor, Empress and Prince gravely bowed in response. The trumpets broke into another long blast; the postillions touched their horses—Majesty was *en route*—the prince riding beside the Imperial carriage, the troopers falling into groups of fours.

As the carriage emerged from the palace garden on the banks of the Seine, you would have sworn the inscrutable person lolling jadedly on the cushions was in some subtle way akin to the solemn figures of the sphinxes, whose eyes seemed to open wide as the master of France drove by. Had they been asked, perhaps they would have solved the riddle many men were pondering even then in what seemed the apogee of Cæsarism. Would they have told Cæsar that he should never again pass those fateful portals in state?

The Parisians afterwards recalled the event as the Romans apotheosized the sinister journey of the great Julius from the tearful pleadings of Calpurnia to the base of Pompey's statue. But there was nothing of the Ides of March in the

Emperor's reception. The huzzahs of the multitude were spontaneous and hearty. All hats flew off when the benignant smiles of the Empress supplemented the gracious inclinations of Napoleon. As Eugénie carelessly examined the acclaiming groups, her radiant smile changed unaccountably, as though something incongruous had been obtruded upon her sight. She leaned over to the Emperor, shading both faces with the long lace fringe of the parasol, and whispered in his ear. With a gesture almost impatient, Napoleon pushed the lace from before him and followed the direction of the Empress's gaze. Those nearest the carriage turned also. What they saw I can not tell, but what they might have seen was this: A young man leaning negligently against one of the gay pagodas at the end of the bridge of the Holy Fathers, presenting a curious contrast with the fervid enthusiasm of his fellows. The effect of his pose and the expression of his face were something sinister, without being malevolent. His eyes, dark with a changing blackness, were fixed on the imperial couple. A sneer, which was more pitying than disdainful, marred the admirable lines of the countenance. He was evidently conscious that the imperial eye was upon him; his pale cheeks flushed and his eyes darkened, while the lines of his mouth deepened with a shade of the malign; but the eyes glittered unshrinkingly under the ordeal. In another moment the equipage had passed beyond him, and the retinue closed the group from his sight. The movement of the crowd dislodged him from his leaning posture. He started impatiently, took off his hat, debated inwardly, and then glanced around him in a perplexed, irresolute way. Presently the wide street was empty. He crossed the roadway and leaning on the pedestal of one of the sphinxes, studied it attentively; then, with a half-suppressed, mocking laugh, said aloud:

"You at least do not add hypocrisy to servile baseness. You do not shout for Cæsar."

This outspoken apostrophe in the English tongue aroused the attention of a neighboring gendarme on duty, who, laudably suspicious of such familiarity with the imperial works of art, or, perhaps, convinced of some ulterior design against the state, came over and, touching the young man on the shoulder, said with insinuating politeness :

"Monsieur is a stranger in Paris? May I have the pleasure of inscribing his name and address in my *carnet*. Monsieur has excited the curiosity of his majesty's officer of the day."

The young man's lips curled somewhat disdainfully, and apparently misunderstanding the official's zeal, answered without embarrassment :

"Trajan Gray, painter, Rue Dragon, 29."

"*Merci bien*, monsieur, Paris likes to keep track of its guests and warn them when they seem to be making false steps."

The gendarme bowed gravely and gave the young man a significant look.

Trajan Gray, thus addressed, was about to reply; then, thinking better of it, saluted his monitor absently and set out toward the bridge. As the humorous suggestion of the gendarme's motive flashed on his mind, he laughed outright. Resting on the balustrade of the bridge, where the panorama of the Seine spread before him as far as the base of the Trocadero, he began idly to contemplate the varied monuments of palatial grandeur and picturesque industry lining its banks and covering its surface. He seemed only vaguely conscious of the grotesque contrast the river afforded, as it winds its way through the heart of the city. He diverted himself in following the surprising commerce its shallow current supports, performing the most unexpected functions. He counted mechanically the garishly dismasted ships which serve as bath and wash houses lining every rood of the banks; then set himself to studying the tranquil groups who day in and day out, many months in the year, extract

from the shallow waters the fish that supplies the humbler tables of the city. His face grew more troubled as he contrasted these semi-aquatic industries, comparing the sordid thrift of the river toilers with the affluent indolence of the crowds on the banks. The Parisian is fond of defining himself as a citizen of the world, born to a heritage of such universal knowledge that nothing surprises him or unduly stimulates his curiosity. A Turk or a Mohawk may pass on the Boulevard in all his aboriginal bravery, and the genuine Parisian would no more turn his head to look than the city fathers who confounded the Goths in the Roman Capitol. But as Trajan Gray stood on the bridge of the Holy Fathers, his body bent over the parapet, many a passer looked at him a second time with something of questioning in the curious glance. The women particularly studied the shapely outlines of the figure with an interest somewhat piqued by the young man's obvious oblivion and easily discerned indifference. Some of them ejaculated pityingly as they turned again to look at the figure :

" *Tiens !* another for the morgue to-night. It's a pity, too. That's the sort that should live."

For the Seine suggests death or traffic only to the Parisians who seek the boulevards and the populous places for loitering or pleasure. To them there is a tragic significance in such an attitude as Trajan's that lovely May afternoon. Even the gendarme repented of his suspicion, and though of a taciturn and undemonstrative habit, as a race, approached the young man with an evident desire to placate. But Trajan was oblivious of his presence and heedless of his kindly scrutiny. It was a face that told much, but yet what it told was not conclusive. It indicated a life not unacquainted with joyous seasons, pain and defeated hopes. At the present moment, a page eloquent of anguish and some strong but covert purpose ; a face that had the lines that guilt or sorrow may leave on young faces ; traces of inward combat that mark the human lineaments as

vaguely as storm and time surfaces exposed to their havoc. For it is in the prime of youth that guilt, or sorrow, or shame, or the dominant passions leave their most permanent tokens. In the middle-aged or the elderly, the natural forces of decay mingle their traces so congenially with the marks of suffering that it is not easy to say whether years or griefs have wrought the ravages.

Meanwhile, Trajan, unconscious of the crowd and its speculations, continued abstractedly studying the bustling scene beneath him. Lumbering omnibuses, their roofs laden with noisy afternoon tourists, clattered by, the long, circling coil of the driver's whip swinging through the air close to the young man's ears. The granite roadway shook under the passing vehicles, as the big Norman horses were with difficulty reined in to the regulation pace. Squads of students from the neighboring schools of Medicine, Law, Divinity and the Beaux Arts, passed in gay, chattering companies, retailing the freaks of the class-rooms, the atelier and the clinics. Faded models, their scant draperies hastily readjusted, dragged themselves wearily along, stopping now and then to look down at the fleets of bustling little steamers shooting up and down the Seine—"swallows" and "flies" as they are not inaptly called—their many-colored smokestacks puffing hot blasts of flame in the faces of the unwary gazers. With these came the incessant train of slow-moving *fiacres*, laden with matronly shoppers, burdened with spoil of the *Bon Marché*. Here and there a wondering foreigner stopped the throng, ejaculating indignant protest against the drivers whose whips and wheels maliciously endangered the inattentive pedestrian; while the more observant stopped, recognizing the Paris bridge as the point of vantage from which may best be seen the human comedy set on its most circumscribed stage; where the by-play takes the same tone and volume as the main narrative; where the red vest and tall glazed hat of the *cocher* replace the paint and patches of the clown, and the world is both the player and personage.

The sun passed lower and lower over the elms of the Tuileries to the west, until the crystal panes of the vast façades of the Medicean palace glowed like a colossal oriflamme—a signal to the city to be joyful in the pride of Cæsar passing in state through the ranks of his loyal Parisians yonder. The "swallows" and "flies" on the Seine increased in number as the afternoon waned, rushing swiftly under the bridge, deep in the water with pleasure parties from the river resorts from Bercy to St. Cloud. Long lines of fishers, of both sexes, took their places gravely on the pebbly edge of the water in the shadow of the high bank. The washerwomen in the bathing-boats scrubbed and sang more energetically as the grateful shadows reached them. Life took on its most careless and most joyous note, labor itself turning into a sort of a jocund travesty of Parisian gayety. From the Tuileries garden the music of the imperial bands filled the air with delicious harmony. As the afternoon grew older, the traffic on the bridge became so dense that Trajan, lost in dreams or intent on the wonderful life unrolled about and beneath him, found himself jostled and almost crushed. The river was as dense with life, over every wave of its surface, as the bridge and the banks. The eye of the young man lingered on these details, though they seemed of little significance to him. There was a look of yearning as he scanned the waters and the shores, as if uncertain whether to make egress through the crowd or end the struggle in his mind by leaping over the balustrade. An old man far below him, who had sat patiently dangling a line in the glistening wavelets, every now and then looked up irritably, and at last, holding the pole over his head with a squirming bait, half nibbled, shouted:

"I say, young fellow, can't you move on to some other point? You've put ill-luck on my line, with your staring eyes and hungry look."

Trajan started, and a slight flush of color came to his face. He dropped his arms, turned and looked vaguely

at the flaming line of the Tuileries, whose lurid glow seemed to threaten him, hesitated for a moment, as if to go toward the music, then clasping his hand over his face, turned his back on the Seine and its obtrusive and tumultuous life, and elbowing his way with difficulty, started toward the Latin quarter. At the end of the bridge he stopped, and began to turn over the volumes of a book-stall.

"Be off, you troublesome *canaille.*"

Trajan turned and saw a little boy cowering before the keeper of the book-stall.

"I am hungry," answered the child; "give me a sou to buy bread?"

"I have no sou for you," said the man; "be off!"

"Stay," said Trajan; "here is a sou."

The little fellow clutched it eagerly with a volley of thanks.

"You're only wasting your money," said the bookman, shrugging his shoulders; "he comes here every day."

"There can be no waste where there's no want. He needs the sou, and I don't."

Trajan resumed his course toward the Palais Mazarin. He stopped with curious deliberation and scrutinized the placard in the wire cages, under the groined arches of the palace, which made known to the passing world that the seat in the company of the "Forty Immortals," made vacant by the death of Lamartine, had been filled by the choice of Napoleon's prime minister, who was to be formally received the month following. The brooding cast of the youth's face changed into a look of angry scorn as his eye caught the context.

"Faugh!" he muttered. "The eagles of Richelieu transformed into owls and bats—immortals only in sycophancy and infidelity to their country." Then, with a shrug of impatience, he turned on his heel and passed out from under the gloomy crypt into the daylight of the Rue de Seine. In

the quaint *cul-de-sac* of this old street, with the swarming life of the Quai Voltaire on his right, and the silent and tortuous causeway-like Rue de Mazarine on the left, he hesitated in uncertainty, as if in doubt which of the three ways to take, then continued up the Rue de Seine. As his eye caught the colors of a print-shop, directly in front of him, he halted before the window, studying abstractedly the engravings, with his mind evidently far away. A pretty girl, seated demurely with some sort of light work in her hand, the pensive mistress of this æsthetic domain, caught sight of the pale face. She studied it a moment coquettishly, and then, with an outbreak of sudden industry, caught up a picture from the counter and came with it to the door, where she stood on tiptoe attempting to hang it upon a hook just above her reach ; but the young man did not seem to understand the mute appeal she cast over her shoulder as the work of art hung suspended. Turning pettishly, as the dreamer remained unconscious of her maneuver, she made bold to suggest, with faintly disguised pique :

" If Monsieur wishes to examine, we have large collections on the floor above."

Trajan roused from his reverie started confusedly, and shaking his head, turned away. The discomfited maiden retired with her picture, muttering, " There is another of them disappointed in love. He's very handsome, all the same, and might make himself more amusing than wandering about in that imbecile way."

Trajan continued up the narrow street, studying with apparent interest the rare old prints and the endless curiosities which have adorned these medieval fronts since the Latin quarter became the haunt of the scholastic population of Paris. In his long residence in the city he had seen every shop in the quarter scores of times. He was familiar with every atom of *bric-a-brac* and *objet d'art* exposed to the critical nomads of the quarter. He knew their history and genealogy as well as their owners, but to-day he dawdled before

each bazar as though he had never set eyes on them before, or, perhaps, had come to bid them hail and farewell. The slanting rays of the sun were long since cut off by the high-gabled roofs and the narrow street curved upward like an open tunnel until lost in the dim outlines of the Church of St. Sulpice. He quickened his pace, though still going aimlessly, as he arrived at the corner of the Rue de Seine and the Rue Jacob, where stands a little *crêmerie* very dear to the memory of many an honest prodigal who studied art and mischief in Paris during the last half century.

Ah! kind Madame Bonjean, where are the *ragoûts* and *pâtés* now that were wont to bring the lads of the university in hungry hordes to your honest door? Where that excellent wine of Beaune that on rare days regaled the reckless young devotees of the divine art? You have passed away, kindly soul, and the secret of your toothsome dishes is gone with you, nor has your successor found the key of the caves of the delicious nectar that warmed the tissues of the merry company that made your hospitable board their home. In this demure and kindly inn Trajan had broken the bread of peace and tasted the salt of contentment many a time. Most of the joys of his Paris life were associated with its modest but dainty board. He stopped irresolutely before the familiar windows. Sounds of disputation, jokes and laughter came from within. He turned suddenly, as if by an impulse stronger than his purpose, and passed over the threshold.

"*Bon jour*, Monsieur Trajan;" and Madame Bonjean turned with *empressement* as she sat enthroned in her *comptoir*. "You are still in good time; your friends have just sat down, and the *pot au croûte* is just coming."

Before the young man could answer, a voice at the other end of the room broke out in friendly excitement:

"*Sapristi!* it's Trajan. Where have you been, old man, since the calends?"

These hearty salutations seemed to discomfit and distress

their object. He flushed, waved his hand with constraint and muttering something about returning again later, turned precipitately and fled as if he feared that the company might, by force, impel him to make one at the jolly feast. He was almost purple and out of breath when his flight ended before the stately front of the Palace of the Luxembourg. Entering the gate he continued at a rapid pace through the court, the blooming flower-beds and clustering foliage, and never slackened his step till arriving at the Queen's *allée*, he sank heavily into one of the empty *banquettes*. From this point of the graveled esplanade could be seen under and through the trees the charming open-air life of Paris in every attitude of vivacious movement. The terraces were thronged with people of every age, rank and condition engaged in eager enjoyment. Trajan's pale face reflected something like sympathetic animation as he realized the spirit about him. The gambols of the children especially and the solicitude of their *bonnes* aroused his interest.

Bevies of little ones were sailing toy-boats on the rippling waters of the basin into which the plashing streams from the tall fountain fell with a tranquilizing cadence ; others were trundling hoops, flying kites, or improvising athletic games of divers sorts. It was a world of infantile merry-makers, disporting with the thousand and one wonders that the ingenuity of the Paris toy-man fashions with the fecund invention of the fairy god-mothers. A gayer scene or one more in disaccord with the melancholy cast of Trajan's thought would be impossible to conjure. Exuberant, unrestrainable enjoyment of health, sun, air and sound limb on one side—on the other, listless brooding, anguish and unmistakable despair. Crouched limply, rather than sitting in the penumbra of the shadow of Marie Stuart, it would have been difficult to tell the cast of the young man's thought; to divine whether his dejection was brooding every-day care or irresolution before some meditated purpose ; whether uncertainty or determination was the secret

of the misery the face revealed. A small urchin trundling his hoop against the legs of the sitting figure, drew back in ludicrous affright as the large eyes fixed themselves absently upon the intruder. The nurse-maids, trim and *débonnaire*, gathering in the vicinity lingered to scrutinize the young man.

"What beaútiful eyes!" said one, a pink-cheeked, laughing gossip; "he must be a young prince."

"A curate or a prince," amended her neighbor.

"Oh, no," responded pink-cheeks, sagely; "he would not be seated here."

"Perhaps the Prince of Evil," whispered the first, crossing herself piously: "were ever such eyes as these seen in a human head before!"

"I will forgive the eyes for the hands," said pink-cheeks, admiringly.

The eyes were fixed on the gravel straight before the young man so intently that the curious maids, following the gaze, started in affright, as if half expecting to see an uncanny spirit responding to their potent signal. They saw nothing, however, but a small urchin, painfully rearing a fabric of pebbles and blocks. Trajan's eyes followed the movements of the little one as his edifice reached a pyramidal form. Over-ambition to render it perfect toppled the whole mass into wreck, amid the shrieks of laughter of the small spectators, and a dismal outcry of impatience from the architect himself. The shouts of the children, the babble of the confused tongues, the hurry-skurry of the ball-players, the crunching of heels on the light gravel, the hurly-burly of the merry-go-round, the scolding of Punchinello as he whacked the head of his sweetheart, and all the manifold jocund follies that make up an afternoon in a Paris park were drowned suddenly in the harmonious crash of an orchestra playing from the center of the grounds, under the spreading chestnuts a few yards away. With a flash of impatience, Trajan arose. The soft strains of the music seemed to

irritate him. It was one of the fragile melodies in vogue in the last days of the Empire, an echo from the *bouffe* operas.

The young man seemed to resent its intrusive lightness. He passed aimlessly away from the sound, regarding with an interest almost comic the marble figures of the queens of France, which give the name, Queen's Walk, to this part of the Luxembourg Gardens. He came to a full stop before the majestic figure of the Medici, studied the pose attentively, seeming, however, lost in the twenty generations of French history embodied in the composition and the handiwork of the sculptor. As he continued from one to the other of these marble dames, from the bride of battle, Anne of Bretagne, to the hapless Antoinette of Austria, his face assumed a look of listess interest, or rather he made an effort to feel it. Turning backward he passed down the marble steps that lead from the esplanade to the fountain, halted a moment among the infants skurrying along the granite brim of the basin, solicitous for their tiny argosies launched on the smooth bosom of the water. Resuming his course he continued on until he reached the shaded thicket on the right hand of the palace. Here he seated himself before one of the blooming patches of green-sward where matronly Parisians and good natured *rentiers* lounge of an afternoon, feeding those friendly little gourmands, the sparrows.

CHAPTER II.

BREAD CAST UPON THE WATERS.

AS Trajan left the jarring jocundity of the scene behind him and entered the tranquil atmosphere of the little amphitheater, its herbage and figures looming up like the objects of a mirage in the misty radiance of the afternoon sun, he grew restful under a subtle pervading influence he

could not define. His inscrutable face lighted for a moment with animation as he dropped into a vacant seat. Directly opposite him sat a young man—a unique contrast in every belonging. Trajan, though not shabby, was in that state betwixt genteel poverty and well-to-do ease which is the most deceptive of the ambiguities of the human animal. From his dress you could not tell whether he was the well-to-do darling of a doting household or the struggling student living on painfully gathered dole, whereas the young man sitting opposite was the picture of easy conditions. Garments not gay nor rich gave you an impression of a youth whose only care for his outer covering was the selection of the costume he should assume for the day. There was an inexpressible charm, frankness, loyalty, ingenuous good-nature and winning gayety in his attitude and movement. Even the birds seized his engaging qualities, for they swirled and flocked about his head, ate from his hand and even audaciously pecked at the crust in his mouth.

Trajan watched the picture and became unconsciously interested. He reflected with something like self-reproach upon his own morose indifference to the simple joys which gave such evident pleasure to the happy and appreciative nature of the other. Insensibly the engaging humor of the bird-feeder penetrated the gloom of his own thoughts, and for the time all that was sinister in the expression first seen in his face, as his gloomy eye fell upon the Empress, disappeared. The one touch of the simple nature before him acted more potently than the gorgeous and varied panorama of life in which he had taken part during the afternoon. Meanwhile the youth's stores are consumed. The birds still hover over him in clamoring clouds. He laughs softly and makes toward the gate, the more resolute of the feathered brood circling over his head as if conscious that he was going to replenish the coveted store. He stops at the pagoda of *La Marchande*, as the lollypop woman that presides over the small mountain of loaflets, dirty gingerbread

and dubious confectionery, is pompously called. She beams benignantly and fills the paper bag with the little loaves that form her principal staple and holds them out to her client, who shakes his head good-humoredly.

"No; that's too many. The little beggars have been feeding all the afternoon and can't eat much more."

"But Monsieur Arden can give the rest to the ducks; they are sadly neglected."

Arden resigns himself to this specious humanitarianism and returns with his spoil. Trajan watches him with real interest—an interest that has fairly transformed the melancholy cast of his countenance, leaving something of sadness, but nothing of the anguish before depicted in every line. As the young man comes toward him his heart leaps for a moment with the hope that he may take the vacant half of the bench beside him. He feels an almost uncontrollable impulse to speak to the stranger. He is disappointed in his hope. Arden resumes his old place, almost buried under the bevies of sparrows fluttering about him. His posture is full of a winning grace. His absorption in his feathered friends is so real that he has no eye for the other envious feeders unable to attract more than sporadic groups. Trajan's face almost breaks into a smile as he watches the contrast and notes that, notwithstanding the seductive assiduities of the worldlings, and their insinuating efforts to tempt the little philosophers to their abundantly laden hands by chirpings and cooings, the awkward ducks alone waddling about respond to these attentions. The Luxembourg sparrow knows his real friend, and refuses to receive largess from the casual comer who feeds him with divided mind!

Why do I linger on these trifling details? Why outline the physiognomy of the young man's surroundings? Why interpret the thought of the crowd, the intent of the by-play that fell under Trajan's eye that May day? Because every incident, detail and outline wrought its effect upon the young man's mind. He saw a larger meaning in the con-

trasts that beset him during that fateful afternoon than he had ever dreamed in his daily familiar intercourse with them. Subtle voices pleaded with him, covert forms assumed meaning and force they had never possessed before. For in his rash and half-mad helplessness, Trajan was in that episodic state of clairvoyance when the brain comprehends occult meanings, shrouded from the healthier mood, when life is a joy and death a remote phantom. He was in the state of men who are sinking in deep waters or confronting a certain death. It is to make comprehensible what precedes and what follows that I detain the reader with the photographic reproduction of what Trajan Gray saw on that May afternoon, and because all these things produced an effect upon the young man, turned his mind from a wild and wicked purpose, brought about by the most grievous blow that can fall upon the sensitive and undisciplined heart.

Trajan watches this pastoral play with continually-growing conviction. He has lost, in a measure, the burden of his woe, and speculates vaguely on the qualities and antecedents of his neighbor. As the sun lowers, the northern front of the granite pile of the Luxembourg is effaced in deep shadows, while the light pouring over the western side throws a soft yellow haze on the intensified green of the shrubs that cover the lawn. The gentle plash of the fountain mingles its music with the chirping of the sparrows and the distant strains of the orchestra, deadened into tremulous echoes by the intervening shrubberies and walls. The voice of a girl singing on a neighboring balcony comes like a nightingale's song when the moon is at the full and the land is buried in shadow. The atmosphere is heavy with the odors of summer flowers in the blooming parterres. The thick columns of spray fall like showers of silver from an unseen cloud.

The children are leaving their play. On the margin of the great circular basin groups of little ones are gathering in their fleets from the glistening bosom of the water. Children of larger growth stand and busy

themselves maneuvering in the tiny barks to shore, throwing pebbles behind them as they come careening homeward. A soft summer wind—the whispering echo of a breeze—stirs the air. The distant orchestra breaks into the last air of the afternoon, "*La donna è mobile.*" Arrested for a moment by the strains of this libertine air, Arden pauses with a small pyramid of bread in his hand. But in a few moments the capricious ingrates, either gorged or attracted elsewhere, cease their clamors and disperse. The rest of the bird-feeders are one by one, departed. The sun sank lower and lower. The music ceased. Long files of nurses with their little broods passed out of the golden gates, chattering and laughing. Presently, in the little green amphitheater, Trajan and Arden were left alone. The latter took out his watch, looked around reflectively, and, seeing no more mouths to feed, gathered the remnants of his store and tossed them under the lilac bushes beyond him.

"You're ungrateful little beggars," he said, half aloud, watching the rear-guard of the sparrows fluttering off toward the bushes, chattering and chirping in a bedlam of musical discord. "You will go to the first shabby Frenchman who invites you when I am gone and feed from his hand, just as you do from mine. But as for that," he added, "we're all of the same *trempe*—men, birds and beasts are alike in thanks, if nothing else." As he spoke a sparrow fluttered painfully from under a clump of geraniums. One wing hung limp and broken. The little creature had been concealed while the more lusty groups held the ground. The cripple dragged itself almost to the young man's feet, where fragments of the bread still covered the grass. It hopped about, keeping a constant eye alert as if dreading the attack of some intruding tormentor. Arden eyed it a moment, then putting out his hands filled with crumbs, coaxed it to feed as its companions had done; but the wounded creature, evidently reminded of some previous treason, skurried back under the leaves, its broken wing impeding its flight pitifully.

"Humph!" said Arden, "I shall modify my axiom; but as one swallow doesn't make a summer, one sparrow can't change the force of a great truth."

The impulse of Trajan to accost the stranger drove every thing else from his mind. He arose from his seat with the words formed on his lips—but sank back in dread. On what pretext? What would the other think? Repulse him probably with disdain. He had created the attributes of the young man in his mind. A generous, sympathetic, unsuspicious nature—but even such a nature would hardly seek strangers in the street for confidence and companionship! Arden turned meditatively towards Trajan. His eye rested on the shrinking figure carelessly, and as he passed, Trajan could have arrested him by stretching forth his arm. If his arm had been chained, it would not have been more impossible. Arden passed on, happy serenity in every movement, humming softly an air from "Mignon." But as if the overruling power that had wrought the change in Trajan still held the door ajar, the young man stopped as he turned in the circular walk. He stooped over a bed of odorous heliotrope, and as he put out his hand to pluck a spray he glanced toward the figure in the seat.

His hand fell to his side as he stood up and his face flushed crimson. Trajan had risen from his bench and had taken the seat occupied by Arden. By what impulse he was not conscious, but once there, he hurriedly thrust his hand under the foliage and drew forth one of the small loaves left from the birds' banquet. There was no overmastering craving to eat, hardly a pang of hunger, for the young man had fasted so long that the desire for food was suspended or deadened. But with the bread in his hand came the impulse to eat. He broke the crust with a trembling, feverish haste and devoured the pieces, wondering to himself at his own action. He was impelled by an instinct rather than a purpose and was not in a condition to analyze either the act or its motive. It was a simple act, but its

effect was as decisive on his future and that of Arden as the most controlling action of long studied premeditation.

This was the sight that caught Arden's eye as he bent to pluck the blossom in the transparent twilight. The effect was electrical and instant. A great yearning and tenderness came upon him. He was very young; the years of his life had known no bitterness. Protection and love had hovered over him from the cradle to manhood, and instead of making him selfish, they had bred gentleness and compassionate sympathy with every form of suffering. Impulsive and chivalrous generosity marked every act of his life.

It was a saying of the young man's sister, that Abu Ben Adhem's name in the angel's book of gold was more impressive to her brother than that of the greatest poet or hero in the scrolls of Time. Hunger and poverty are not rare sights in a great city, but hunger and want, in such form as he now saw them, had never come to his eye before. He was strangely stirred by the pathetic misery Trajan's attitude suggested. He saw the young man's face distinctly and read refinement and sensibility there. He was dimly conscious that profligacy or improvidence had no share in the distress outlined in the marks of the troubled countenance. He instantly resolved to proffer his good offices to the stranger, feeling a sort of guilty responsibility in the other's distress. But how, under what pretext? To boldly offer his purse he felt would be a cruel mortification, for it was plainly not vulgar want that afflicted the object of his good intentions. To even make known that he had seen the unfortunate satisfying his hunger with the crusts flung carelessly under the lilacs would repel and humiliate him, while to be the resource he meditated it was essential to soothe and win confidence. These thoughts flashed through his mind as he retraced his steps, scrutinizing Trajan keenly. His own inexperience helped him in the crisis, for, putting himself in Trajan's place, he argued that he would not take it amiss, if in the same misery he received the proffer of interest and friendliness.

"He looks like an American," he said to himself; "and a man with such a face can not be an adventurer. He must be in the university, and if he be, I have a comrade's claim and a countryman's right to come to his aid." Then, with characteristic decision, as he quickened his pace, "I'll be hanged if I don't speak to him." But in spite of the robust romance that inspired this impulse, he grew less confident as the determination grew more decided, and would even then have drawn back had his approach not committed him to intervention. He reached the bench where Trajan had sunk into a sort of collapse, his head resting on his arm thrown over the back of the seat.

"Pardon me," said Arden, his voice a little tremulous, "I beg you won't think me intrusive, or my motive curiosity, but I think I owe you a good turn, if only in the Arab creed that we are bound in friendly bonds to whomsoever has shared our bread." He hesitated, out of breath, then continued in a tone he strove to make natural and frank: "I saw you a moment since—and—and—if I were in such a plight, I should think pretty poorly of the man who could pass by without a sign, or the proffer of a helping hand."

Trajan had seen Arden turn to come toward him. He knew that some such words would be spoken, because he knew that were the case reversed he would have done the same thing. But though he had longed to speak before, he was lost in an overmastering humiliation now. The horror and shame of his sudden impulse to eat the bread rose before him as a barrier to every thing like equality with the other. He was powerless to turn and look his interlocutor in the face. The voice, cordial, frank, melodious, thrilled him as the music of the mass thrills the shriven sinner at the altar. There was in it a subtle suggestion of a comprehension of his hideous resolution and absolution of it, the touching of a chord that human agencies reach only in the vital crises of life when the heart strings are charged with agony and their vibrations open the fountain of tears. He raised

his head and fixed his dark eyes, dazed and heavy, upon the face of the embarrassed Samaritan—but his lips remained sealed.

The impulsive philanthropist was more perplexed than ever. He was prepared for almost any other form of wounded susceptibility than this.

"Come," he said to himself, "I have broken the bark and I will get to the fiber now. My name," he broke out, "is Elliot Arden ; I am of the Law School of the Sorbonne, and by the laws of its *camaraderie* I have a right to be your friend, if you are, as I think, also of the university ! "

He waited for a response. Certainly he thought this unreserve must win his confidence. He couldn't imagine what else to say. As Trajan remained speechless, Elliot stood confused and alarmed. He began to repent his impulsive advances. He thought the man an ingrate to subject him to such an ordeal. The dark eyes continued fixed upon his face ; could he be mad ? Then Trajan's head fell over on his breast, his two hands covered his eyes and Elliot saw tears trickling through the long thin fingers. Overcome by this spectacle, the unhappy Elliot dropped into the seat beside this extraordinary victim of over-susceptibility. He waited patiently for the man beside him to reject or accept his kind intentions.

The sun had disappeared. The silver circle of the crescent moon hung far away over the golden dome of the Invalides. The plash of the fountains in the still air sounded like the rush of the river. The chattering of the sparrows sunk into intermittent chirpings. Far away where the round turret of the observatory rose in the clear twilight above the branches the plaintive opening note of a nightingale soothed the ear. The gravel walks of the garden echoed only to an occasional step. Paris was at dinner, and the interval was the quietest of the day, for the open-air life that closes with the dinner begins again so soon as that feast is finished.

Suddenly Trajan, removing his hands, turned to Elliot and found voice:

"You must think me an ingrate or an imbecile. But if you knew what I can not tell you, there would be ample excuse for my perverseness. It's only fair to say that you have misjudged me somewhat. I am not suffering from penury, though it is true that it is more than twenty-four hours since I have eaten any thing. The interest you show in me deserves fuller confidence; but I beg that its refusal may not make you repent your action. I owe it to you to say that the state you see me in is brought about by no fault of my own. Unless," he added quickly, "a man's infirmity be his own fault."

"This incident to you," continued Trajan, with a melancholy smile, "has the novelty of the unreal and romantic. But for me it has a meaning that I shall never misconstrue during the years of my life. What that meaning is you may some day learn; what its significance is to me I shall take good care you shall never forget."

"I do not presume to speak of being necessary to you. I have the desire to do by you as I should expect a man to do by me, if despondency, treason or what-not had overcome my forces of resistance and combat."

While Elliot uttered the last words, two figures approached the bench where the young men were seated.

"Messieurs," said one of them, as the two halted, "you have been seen despoiling the herbage. It is against the law to touch the plants in the public gardens. I summon you to answer before the commissaire."

The men were gendarmes, and had either seen or had been informed of Elliot's plucking the heliotrope—for under the Empire official eyes and ears were everywhere. Explanation was useless. The young men were instantly forced to accompany the gendarmes to the neighboring station, near the Odéon Théâtre, a stone's-throw from the palace gates. Before the commissaire a book was opened, and the names and addresses of the culprits written down.

"Students, are you, messieurs?" said the official scrutinizing Trajan closely. The young men displayed their university cards.

"But you, Monsieur Gray, are a member of the *Treize-Treize* Club, that meets at the Café Procope!"

"I am," said Trajan tranquilly. "What has that to do with the affair?"

Disregarding the question, the official continued:

"You took part in the demonstration Victor Noir, and made an incendiary address in the Rue du Temple last month. Is it you or Monsieur Arden that broke the law in the Garden?"

"Neither Monsieur Arden nor myself broke any law in the garden," answered Trajan simply.

"One of you, the gendarme could not distinguish which, bent down and plucked a flower. Was it you, Monsieur Gray?" continued the official, as though Trajan had not spoken.

Elliot explained that he had bent over the heliotrope with the intention of picking a bunch, unconscious of the law, but had been diverted. He colored and stammered as he saw Trajan turn his face away,—then continued:

"I saw my friend reaching through the seat to get something I had left behind me—but he touched no flower nor shrub—in the meaning of the law."

"Is this true?" said the commissaire, turning to the gendarme who had spoken to the young men. The man explained that he was standing at some distance and had remarked the figure stooping and putting out his hand, but could not see in the twilight what followed.

"*Très bien*," said the official nodding; then pushing a sheet of paper with some printed forms on it, and filled up in writing, toward Trajan directed him to sign. The young man read it to Arden. It was a charge of violating public property, with the answers of the alleged criminals. The young men signed and the official added:

"You are under surveillance, messieurs, and until it is withdrawn you must deposit a 'surety' of 250 francs each, or wait the determination of the affair before the Correctional Police."

"But we haven't so much money with us," said Elliot, indignantly.

"Persons who give themselves up to creating revolutions rarely have," responded the official dryly.

Trajan said in English:

"I will explain the meaning of this outrage to you when we get out of the scrape. You are only guilty of being in my company." Then in French he asked: "Will you take our watches as security?"

"Certainly not; this is an imperial bureau, not a pawnshop!"

"Will you take a check on the American bankers?" asked Elliot, regaining his wits.

"For the whole sum, or for your part alone?" asked the official, with a significant gleam in his dull, fishy eye.

"For the whole sum, of course," replied Elliot promptly.

"No; I can not do that."

"Very well," said Elliot, "I will send for the money. Can you oblige me with a messenger and means to write a note?"

When this was written and dispatched, the young men were shown into another room in the rear of the semi-judicial chamber in which this summary justice was dispensed. A gendarme stood obtrusively in the doorway to remind the young men that they were under the eye of the law.

"Is this a customary thing in Paris?" asked Elliot, as they seated themselves.

"Yes, under the present *régime*. The motive in this business is to intimidate me. I belong to one of the students' republican clubs, and the police are constantly watching to compromise the members in order to justify expulsion from the city. If they could fasten the slightest misde-

meanor on me, I should be ordered to quit Paris at once. You, as a student, are open to the suspicion of sympathizing with the enemies of the dynasty, even if your name does not figure among the rolls of the clubs."

"I have heard a great deal about the petty tyrannies of the Empire, but I never would have believed this. I own to a strong admiration for Napoleon and preference for his government above all the makeshifts that have tried to rule France since 1815."

"If you could make Dogberry out there believe that," said Trajan, laughing, "you would be liberated in a moment."

"But I am beginning to think better of that impression, now," rejoined Elliot, humorously.

"Just as every honest man does when he begins to see into the methods by which this generous and splendid people are misgoverned. This, however, is a dangerous theme for such a place. In every bureau of the police there are men who understand English and other tongues. Let us, therefore, be prudent."

Through the single narrow window of the room the *detênus* could look out on the open square before the gardens.

The crowds had dwindled to a few aimless loiterers, or work-folk hurrying homeward. The delicate gray atmosphere that envelops Paris of an evening, like a vaporous reflex of the discolored white of its buildings, was filled with the quality that makes the mirage, in transparent regions of mountain or lowlands, by the sea. *Crépuscule*, the French call it, but not the twilight known and loved in Saxon lands. A season of expansion; when the noise of the great city is suddenly hushed and you hear your own voice clearly for the first time since early morning, with much the sensation that follows emerging from a plunge in the sea. Something of a recognition of this seemed to be in the minds of the two fatefully-met young men, not less than a realization of the strange relations in which they came together. Constant and obtrusive as are the contrasts in life, you would go far

before meeting a more marked one than the caprice of fate had thus thrown together. All that was in Elliot Arden you felt very sure you could read in his face. Frankness, good-nature, impulsiveness which might even go to recklessness. In the other, a reserve which could never be reticence—rather the shrinking of a creature unacquainted with his kind.

The two young men stood at the window gazing in silence over the graceful minarets of the churches and palaces spectral and dim in the transparent air.

"You have sent to a friend for the money?" asked Trajan suddenly. "Is there any chance of failure?"

"I have sent to my cousin—as I didn't care to frighten my mother and sister—who couldn't understand the matter. It may take some time to find him, but we shall have the better appetite for dinner. You will be charmed with my cousin—a sage, philosopher and friend worth knowing and having. He pretends to be a cynic—but is any thing else."

Trajan, with a sudden irresistible burst of feeling, seized his companion's hand and pressing it with both his own, articulated rapidly: "You are a wonderfully kind fellow. Though," he added faltering, "praise from me might not be construed as in the best form at this moment. It is not every man that can give a crust, and I am afraid it is not every man that can accept one. But your voice, and what I may call your magnanimity, in venturing to recall me to myself, have done a good deal more than you suspect." Then musingly, as he walked the floor and looked through the gathering shadows, "The potent resolutions in life are taken suddenly. You—but never mind—I am afraid if I talk I shall talk like a fool. Half my life I have been trying to teach myself how to be silent"—then, with an air of engaging levity—"but I have been either a poor pupil or a bad teacher. If the lawyer who pleads his own cause has a fool for a client, the philosopher who tries to follow his own doctrine has an imbecile for a student. When I am on the high

road to my most cherished ends, my tongue gets the better of me and delivers me over to my enemies. Almost unconscious of the things I have said, or uttering them from intuition rather than reflection, I have made enemies of the bitterest sort by a phrase, the very form of which was forgotten so soon as spoken."

During this rather inconsequent monologue, on what was obviously only a superficial phase of his nature, Elliot studied his companion furtively. He felt a sense of triumphant joy in the vindication of his act in the garden, in obtruding himself between the young man and his dimly discerned purpose, though the strength of that purpose he was even now far from realizing. He felt a comic embarrassment as to the manner in which he should sustain his *rôle*. He feared to allude to the past and distrusted the ordinary commonplaces of life, likely to grate upon a mind so recently all ajar. The bells of St. Sulpice were sounding eight o'clock when a cab stopped before the door of the building in which the friends were detained, a messenger handed Elliot an envelope, which on opening was found to contain the money and a few lines from his cousin Philip.

CHAPTER III.

IN THE CAFÉ VOLTAIRE.

"WELL, that's an experience that I hadn't anticipated," cried Elliot, drawing a long breath when the money had been counted and a receipt given. "I don't yearn to repeat it, and I shall take care how I ever look at public property in Paris in future." The commissaire stood in the doorway, evidently studying the two young men, and, indeed, an eye less observant or discerning would have found the study an interesting one. Trajan's face—a

volume not always open, or, if open, not always easily legible—the dark hair long, but not to eccentricity, framed the almost painful pallor of the countenance. Symmetry of limb and figure gave him, as he walked, an unconscious air of self-assertion not altogether disassociated from the arrogance of natures that have suffered much, and through that suffering seem to have broken into a consciousness of power, which sometimes comes as strongly with failure as with triumph in life—an appearance, in short, in person, carriage, expression and movement, which makes enemies for some men before they have opened their lips, and adorers for others even after they have opened their lips.

By the undiscriminating his self-control would have been called overweening, if first impressions were uttered by those who leap at conclusions. A more reserved and subtle judgment would have called him, however, self-poised, highly endowed, but, perhaps, over-given to reticence and morbid introspection. As we see him in this crisis of his life—he moves with the unconscious bearing of a man who, having been under the enemy's fire for half a day, forgets the ordeal mechanically when the foe is broken, not quite sure whether death has disappeared or is still confronting him.

Elliot, sympathetically conscious of the delicacy of the situation, strove to divert the mind of his companion from himself, and chattered away on every commonplace he could invent.

Nor was Elliot himself a less striking figure than Trajan Gray. There was in the rich, harmonious accents of his voice, a fascination that made the most prosaic of his thoughtless sayings seductive and persuasive. In figure, while his companion was something under the medium stature, Elliot was slightly above it. His was the clear type of the Anglo-Saxon—light hair, blue eyes, roseate, but not ruddy, complexion, and that air of healthful enjoyment of everything which gave the idea of a man who had never endured the trial of a physical or mental disease.

Passing the Luxembourg gates into the Rue Vaugirard, the two young men penetrated under the colonnades of the gray old porticoes of the Odéon, the second state theater of France. But its wonderful array of books, running up in stairs of learning, if not of light, into the very groining of the arches, did not arrest them now as at other times. They hurried down the network of lane-like streets, which still show something of the old Paris Trajan loved, and knew, inch by inch, to the broad, new Boulevard St. Germain, down the very same Rue de Seine which Trajan had traveled three hours before, delaying the temptation of the water.

At the corner of the Quai Voltaire, Elliot turned into a famous restaurant, sacred to the memory and eloquent of the presence of many generations of all that was brilliant, learned, gay, wise and godless in art, letters, romance, philosophy, statecraft and song—a restaurant where Voltaire, with his dear Duc de Brabant and his adoring Marquis de Condorcet, had reveled. The mark of age was on every thing, save the *cuisine*; for, while there is no limit to the Parisian reverence for antiquity in forms, lines, furniture, *bric-a-brac* and what not, age has no temptations for his stomach, unless it be in wine.

As they passed up the stairs, Elliot, resuming the conversation more for the sake of diverting his companion from the late episode than any thing else, said, with animation:

"I live in this quarter by preference; not that I am an archæologist and study its monuments scientifically, but I love the atmosphere of the old wits. To me it is a never-ceasing source of generous thought to pass, for example, down the Rue de Seine, the first thoroughfare from the king's quarter, yonder, to the splendid old palace of the Luxembourg. As for the Luxembourg Gardens, I know nothing more enchanting than the atmosphere one enters there. I am far back in the Middle Ages as I walk through the *allées* of the queens and study the marble

figures of the princely women who shared with the Capets, Valois and Bourbons the glories, crimes and grandeur of the French monarchy. I have studied the marble faces of Catherine de Medici and Mary, her weak kinswoman, and Margaret of Burgundy and Anne of Austria, and I have sat for hours before that sometime heir-apparent to the throne, Marie Stuart, the wife of the young prince of the House of Valois. I have striven to see if the guilty story of their lives left any trace in the lineaments given them by art; but they are impassive as their own tombs—there is nothing to be learned from them. The rigid lips of Catherine de Medici have nothing to tell of St. Bartholomew, and the beautiful mouth of Mary is forever silent on the story of Darnley and Chastelard."

Elliot's tone fell into a sort of dreamy monologue, and, turning with Trajan, they passed through the narrow corridors where the *maitre d'hôtel*, coming deferentially forward, took their hats. Elliot was a client well known in the place, and it was to him the *maitre* addressed the inquiry whether messieurs would dine in the *salle à manger* or *en cabinet*. Elliot nodded and the man went away.

In a moment he returned and informed Elliot, that messieurs were served in the cabinet number seven.

All Paris restaurants seem to have been built on the same model—the lower or street floor a great *salon* adorned in red plush; endless mirrors, small square tables with snowy linen, glistening crystal and princely silverware; *garçons*, white-aproned and tidy, and an air of cleanliness pervading everything which would invite an appetite if a man had none; the street wall cut up into wide compartments of glass, and the interior screened from outside observation by delicate gauzy curtains forming no barrier to the passing scenes without: above, small rooms with cabinets ranged in size from a capacity of four up to that of twenty.

Elliot and his guest were shown into a *cabinet à quatre*. Here a small square table was set with charming detail.

Flowers adorned it, and the silver might have been taken from the private pantry of a reigning prince.

Elliot, in his part of host, seated his guest in the most desirable place, and when the soup was served continued the conversation as though it had not been interrupted.

"I have been attending the lectures, but remain now in the university, more to compare the latest advances of French jurisprudence with Harvard teachings than to qualify myself—I am giving time to the *belles lettres* lectures and find them profitable. I own, however, that half the charm and half the motive of my presence in Paris are the extraordinary people I meet. I have made some extremely interesting acquaintances—men of all countries, all types of and I may say of all grades of cultivation as well as of every rank of genius—for genius has ranks as every thing else has, nor can a man without a certain sort of genius suffer the attrition of such society as this of the Paris schools without sinking into obscurity."

At this moment the discreet waiter appeared at the door and handed Elliot a card. The young man looked at it for a moment with some impatience, then hastily wrote upon it and handed it to the waiter; but suddenly bethinking himself, exclaimed:

"Stay!" Then, in English, to Trajan he said: "My cousin and a friend with whom I have an engagement this evening are outside. Would you mind if they joined us at dinner?"

Trajan, who had been listening attentively to Elliot, seemed not to catch exactly the intent of the young man's question and bowed absently.

Elliot hesitated a moment and then added: "I should be glad to have you meet them, for they are well acquainted in Paris, and besides being agreeable fellows, I have no doubt they will be of service to you."

Trajan flushed and looked at his friend with a shade of embarrassment.

Elliot, conscious of the mistake he had made, continued: "I mean they are the most entertaining men and will, as the French say, *égayé* if you should happen to feel blue and know of no better company." Then he added to the waiter: "Show the gentlemen in, or, stay, I will go myself —excuse me a moment."

The young man went out of the room and returned a moment later.

"Mr. Gray, my cousin—Mr. Kent, Mr. Carnot."

To the great surprise of Elliot the second personage exclaimed:

"Why, Gray, is that you? Where have you disappeared to of late? My sister only yesterday sent you a commission. One of your rich Americans wants a sketch of the Hôtel Cluny and some models from the collection, and Theo thought you would be glad to do it if you had nothing else on your easel."

Trajan said, with some constraint: "I have been out to Barbison, sketching for the last fortnight, and only returned to Paris yesterday."

"So you are already acquainted," said Elliot cheerfully. "It is a happy coincidence, as I want Mr. Gray to know me, and I count on you to make him know how much wiser I am than I can make visible myself," and he laughed gayly at his own expense.

Seats were placed and plates for the two guests, and Trajan took the opportunity of studying the kinsman of his new friend, while the latter fell into conversation together.

"Your mother expected you to dinner yesterday, and was quite sure you would be home to-day. We have just left there and fancied that as you were not at home we should be certain to find you here."

"I had intended to go to dinner yesterday," said Elliot, "but I found myself late in the afternoon in the Bois de Boulogne, and took dinner in the park with some of the law fellows."

CHAPTER IV.

STATE SECRETS.

NOT the least endearing of the many souvenirs left his beloved Paris by the recluse of Fernay, the Frenchman of sensibility holds the Maison Voltaire, in which our four friends are installed. Eating is but an incident of a well-served dinner in any country—given, of course, the right sort of company—and the very atmosphere seems to transform the diners who sit down at the exquisite board of the Maison Voltaire. This effect was palpable in the group of friends, as the admirably disciplined domestics brought on the courses and the meal proceeded to the dessert. While the passing topics of the day formed the staple of discussion two of the young men studied Trajan furtively, under cover of the generous Chambertin of a *cru* for which the Maison was famous among all the rivals of the left bank. A transformation, which was not so much a change as a restoration, came upon Trajan. The absence of interest, the depression easily mistaken for moroseness vanished. His voice resumed a mellow quality natural to it; his pale face became roseate; his eye lost the mocking glitter of an hour before; the whole effect was to lessen his years and leave him a creature of almost buoyant boyishness, as compared with the half-dazed outcast Elliot had seen him in the Garden.

This was due obviously to the sudden and subtile bond the strange meeting had established betwixt him and Elliot, though the persuasive humanities of the well-ordered table were not without their agency in the transformation. It would be an obdurate grief that could resist the convivial amenities of dinner, as it is set out among the race who have carried cooking not only to a fine art, but to the demonstration of means to intellectual ends. It is the dinner

that feeds the brain as well as the stomach, which the Parisian piques himself on presenting. There is no clogging; no overfeeding; no uproarious drinking; all that is earthy in the viands has been smothered in odors that suggest Cathay rather than the kitchen. This well-ordered, noiseless service is a ministry of mind rather than of matter. Pots and pans and red-faced cooks have no association with the dainty details. The stately domesticity of the English banquet is wanting, but the profuse trifles that seem part of the feast amply make up the lack.

There is an appetizing humor in the very discretion with which the *garçon* surveys his well-ordered *plats;* a suggestion of orotund ampleness in the unctuous queries addressed the head of the table, that would inspire a company of anchorites to well-bred gluttony.

Next to having dined well, there is no man but loves the moment when he sits down at the table expecting to dine well. Any man who knew the Café Voltaire knew that he was going to dine not only on the fat of the land, but on the best morsels of that fat, at any of the three-score tables hidden in their box-like *cabinets.* Suggestive things could be seen in every nook and corner of the glorious old place—from the remarkable personage with pink ribbons and fluffy lace who sat at the *comptoir,* as one passed up the grand *escalier,* to the unobtrusive garçon-in-chief, whose pride it was to know every client entering the savory penetralia—a savant who grades the guests by the quality of the wine they drink. The privacy of a duke or a Vanderbilt could not exceed the impressive seclusion of the favored *clientèle,* for whose coming certain *cabinets* always seemed in waiting.

When seated therein, the solemn state of a prince could not be more perfect in the ancestral hall. Candelabra light the compact rooms; while engravings decorate the panels; the center of the shining marquetry floor is covered with a rug adjusted to the size of the table; a square window draped with thick stuff curtains, gives air, not light, to the

scene. The chairs, high-backed and carved, suggest the spoil of luckless *grands seigneurs*, victims of the teachings of the patron saint, M. Arouet de Voltaire. Repose and luxury are the surroundings, and the feast insensibly takes the same tone. The face of the *garçon*, as he surveys the altar of his ministrations, is to the observant an animated mirror, reflecting with whimsical accuracy the kind and condition of people he is serving. Nothing could be more descriptively delicate than his attention to Elliot and his guests. Yet the observer, quick through long experience in noting the subtile gradations of the *garçon's* manner, from obsequiousness to toleration, could read in every gesture of the waiter the relative importance of each person in the company. No man whose fortune it has been to study the evolutions of a Paris waiter of the higher school, but is struck by the unobtrusive positivism that marks that most perfect of all social weathercocks, the *garçon*. The race is common enough, but its consummate expression can only be found in the rarified strata of Paris society. There is an inexpressible unction, a seductive invitation to eat, drink and be merry in his very *tenu*, which the race, at its best, elsewhere lacks. He serves the table with pride and pleasure, and his pride increases, not so much with the social status of his guests, as their decorous appreciation of the feast.

This pleasure is augmented in degree, as the wines are fine and the food well chosen. The waiter in London, Vienna, New York, or any metropolitan accretion of human particles, may subdue you by the austerity of his office, and bully you by the innumerable artifices of a vulgar menial nature, but the Parisian prototype is wiser in his day, and neither begs, bullies nor berates. The *largesse* you leave him is rather the souvenir of an equal to an equal than the gratuity carelessly tossed to a menial. The Paris "man and brother" brings about his conquest by the negation of all that you associate in your mind with his kind. What tactful

deference to the host! What engaging and generous zeal that you shall have the best in the "patron's" cellar! How seductively you are made to feel that the "patron" himself is a common enemy to combat; the waiter an ally whom you have invoked! the demure, respectful, devoted being who adjusts with trained hands and artistic sense the table and its appetizing viands, whose devotions for the moment are not alone the honor and repletion of your friends, but solicitude that your table shall make a fine effect, and that your dinner shall receive not only the justice of eating, but the encomiums of those honored by the attentions of a friend so superior and so kind! How insensibly it stimulates a man's best opinion of himself to have such a potentate in attendance, set out in the costume prescribed by his order, not as a mark of condition, but as a regalia of place, like the surplice at the altar, or the livery of the state!

These thoughts passed through the active mind of Trajan, as the kindly stimulant of the Burgundy warmed him. He studied Elliot with discreet attention. He thought he had never seen a face of such inexpressible and winning cordiality, and he longed to translate it to his own canvas yonder in his garret in the Rue Dragon. His heart and brain were working together now. An overmastering and woman-like love filled him as he thought of the action that had brought him, in his most desperate despair, near this manly fellow. He could scarcely realize that this careless, kindly, gay young sybarite—the soul of the feast—was the man who had come between himself and the hideous fulfillment of the morbid purpose he had long dreaded and finally resolved.

Nor was Elliot's kinsman, Philip Kent, a less interesting or attractive study. He, too, was a Saxon type, with a distant resemblance to his cousin. His form was, however, brawnier. He was fully six feet in stature; his face was bearded in the fashion then coming into vogue and known as *à la Prusse*. Regularly cropped beard, and mustaches light and tawny like his hair; a mouth of regular propor-

tions, but at intervals suggesting a want of firmness; an aquiline nose, perhaps a trifle large for classic beauty, but an indication of force and virility: an open and sincere eye, merry and frank; a voice of deep, melodious quality, and a manner inspiring confidence.

The second of the two comers would have been judged a handsome man in any company: he would, indeed, have been attentively considered among the most prominent of social forces. A long, high head of the Cæsarian order, well developed and covered by fringes of curling dark hair falling in disorder over a square forehead, gave him an undemonstrative air of thought which poets and painters admire; the eye, a dark brownish gray, seemed alive with sympathy and interest; the olive tint, almost blonde in its delicacy, gave him an aristocratic cast, which left the man something of an enigma were a stranger suddenly called on to define his place. Jules Carnot was the type of a Frenchman endowed with superior education, who, through the varied social attrition of life under the Empire, had been worn into perfect form—a man who, in the most marked company, was welcomed by every body as an agreeable, well-informed, well-bred, good-humored companion, of whom not much was known, save that he was a decided acquisition to the *salon*, the club, the picnic, or what not, and the innumerable gayeties that made up the life of the more favored classes during the latter part of the reign of Napoleon III.

"You are the eye and the ear of the company," said Elliot, addressing himself to Carnot. "What are all your friends, the princes, dukes and duchesses doing with themselves? Is it true that the Ollivier ministry is to be thrown out by the Emperor? Is it true that the Vice-Emperor Rouher is to return to power, and that the court is going to indulge in a comedy of warlike errors, as Rochefort is never tired of prophesying?"

"Ah! *ma foi*," responded the Frenchman, with just a tinge of constraint, more in his manner than his words.

"Who can tell? The Emperor has a curious habit of brooding over affairs, giving every body the idea that he is slowly coming to a resolution, then suddenly turning around and carrying out an entirely unexpected programme. The Bismarck business has saddened his life, and the Duc de Persigny makes no concealment of the fact that the empire, or the dynasty rather, rests on the hazard of the die, and that die is war."

"By the way, Carnot, what was that story I heard of your telling about Bismarck overreaching the Emperor in the Luxembourg affair?" asked Kent.

"Where was it you heard that?" said Carnot in surprise. "That is a state secret, or rather, it is a perilous piece of gossip to have associated with a man who stands well in imperial society;" and he colored as he found the eyes of Trajan fixed on him questioningly. "The story is simple, and I beg that it may not be repeated on my authority. The Emperor had been playing fast and loose with Bismarck at Biarritz, and between them they had hatched up a very nice scheme for the division of spoil that was to follow the defeat of Austria. When the Prussians declared war upon Francis Joseph, Prince Metternich the Austrian ambassador, came to Persigny, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and begged an interview with the Emperor. Napoleon evaded him on one pretext or another, until Metternich, losing patience, laid before Persigny the orders of his master, Francis Joseph, categorically promising to Napoleon his own will on the right bank of the Rhine on the sole condition that a French army corps of a hundred thousand men should march at once on Strasbourg, threatening Mayence and Cologne. It was the physician of the Duc de Persigny that made this known. The doctor was sitting in the Duke's private cabinet waiting for him, the very day that the Prussians defeated the forces of Hanover, when Persigny came rushing into the apartment tearing his hair and muttering like an insane man. Not noticing the doctor for a

moment he struck the desk, exclaiming: 'And to call that man a French Prince! No wonder his paternity is doubted.'

"The doctor coughed to make his presence known. The Duke, instead of ceasing, continued addressing his remarks to the physician. 'Could you believe such a thing? I have offered him on the part of the Emperor of Austria our ancient frontier to the bank of the Rhine, the outlines of royal and imperial France, the dream of Henry IV., the great Richelieu and of Napoleon I.—the aspiration of every Frenchman from the Pyrenees to the Channel, and what do you think this man, this Napoleon, this ruler of France, says in return? "It is too late." Too late!' he broke off in a perfect frenzy of wrath—'too late to get without a blow what we have wasted millions of treasure and thousands of lives to obtain! Too late to carry out the simple and consecutive policy of every French sovereign from Charlemagne to Louis Philippe!'"

"A very interesting bit of political tattle," said Elliot, in awe. "What was the pretext?"

"The pretext," said Carnot, "was that Napoleon had promised Bismarck to hold his hands off, in return for which, Prussia would close her eyes to a French aggression on Luxembourg, and, if things promised well—Belgium."

"What," said Philip, "the paltry duchy of Luxembourg in exchange for the Rhine from Basle to Coblentz! Oh, that's absurd! Imperial promises would break before such an alternative as that. You may say what you please about the infirmity of purpose of Napoleon III., but he would never allow a mere understanding with that ill-bred fellow, Bismarck, to stand in the way of such a magnificent prospect as that."

"It seems, however, that he did," concluded Carnot, looking at Trajan with suggestion as he spoke. The latter merely interjected:

"You may be sure if there were any thing mean or unmanly the man of December would be equal to it."

"However," continued Elliot, "that is going away from the point that I was interested in. The air is filled with rumors of war; the *Bourse* is agitated and uneasy, and the students in the Quartier are even talking about forming a regiment, and I am asked to join."

"I do not know any pretext that war could be declared upon now," said Carnot, "unless it is the candidacy of the Hohenzollern prince for the throne of Spain, which, of course, contravenes one of the fundamental principles of French policy. Even an outsider can see that France would stand in a rather perilous position with the Prussian monarchy at one door and a Prussian dynasty at the other. I heard young Gambetta, over in the Café Procope, say the other evening, that the empire would walk into the trap and go to war, now when the Prussians are ready, and that if it did the republic would be in existence within a year, for France, he declares, is ridiculously ill-armed and ill-provided —more so than Austria was in 1866."

"But where are all those wonderful chassepots that the gossips have been amusing us with for a year or more?" asked Philip—"to say nothing of that sum of all murderous inventions, the mitrailleuse."

Elliot rejoined: "They are all—Gambetta declares—on paper. The Imperial Army has been growing rich and lazy and enervated since the Crimean war, for the Mexican expedition was merely a grand foray for loot."

"I do not agree with your young radical," said Philip. "France is the first military power in Europe, and Prussia would find a very different adversary from the one she met in Austria. The conquest of Von Benedek's army was due to the needle-gun and the incorrigible martinetism and red-tapism of the Austrian war office."

"Gambetta," continued Elliot, "holds that France is rotten in every sense. National patriotism is obliterated;

the army is held together merely for the support of the dynasty, and in no sense reflects the ancient aspirations and fervor that brought about the conquests of 1793. One campaign, according to Gambetta, would dissolve the French organization like smoke."

"A patriotic person, this Gambetta," interjected Philip, contemptuously, "who, thinking that of his country, is willing to see it brought to peril and, perhaps, destruction; for if ever the Prussians get this side of the Rhine as victors, they will come with the memory of two hundred years of repression of the affronts put upon them during the present dynasty, and with a smarting sense of the high hand with which they have been checked in their aspirations for unity. Instead of one Blucher, there will be a million, each hungering for the spoil of the richest country in Europe, and resolute in the destruction of every monument commemorating the vassalage of the Fatherland. I am free to say, I do not understand patriotism in a Gambetta sense. If it is Republican to wish one's country harm, then I am an Imperialist."

"You don't understand Gambetta," interrupted Trajan, in a thick, unsteady voice, struggling to keep the tones from trembling. "He loves France passionately, but he hates the despotism that is settled upon her. He thinks that the destruction of that despotism would be cheaply bought by the temporary defeat of the dynasty's armies, for the armies do not represent the people, nor sympathize with them. This Bonaparte is hateful to every man who values free government—and by free government I mean such an institution as exists in England or America. He did a cowardly—a dastardly thing—he stole a nation's virtue, or, as Prevost Paradol said the other day, 'France is like a great lady who has descended to live with her footman, for eighteen years, blinded to her own degradation and flaunting in her enforced unchastity.' To purge herself of this sin France must undergo penitence. That penitence will come when

she is made to suffer through the instrumentality of this adventurer, who, having first degraded her by violence, holds her in that degradation by stupefying her—drugging her with the accursed spirit of riches, and blinding her by the *ignis-fatuus* of glory. France has been in a delirium for twenty years. She can recover her reason only by the calamity of war. If that war ends in defeat, that will restore the sentiment of manhood, now dormant, that will rekindle the aspirations of the rights of man, which in America have made a great people, and in England a powerful and well-ordered one."

Trajan paused for a moment. The others looked at him in wonder. He continued:

"The salvation and protection of society was the plea upon which Bonaparte seized France eighteen years ago. Society is its own saviour and its own protector. Nothing can justify fraud or violence in dealing with society. If the sentiment of virtue, of self-respect had not been stifled in the French people, they would never have endured such an orgie as this malefactor has continued for eighteen years. In the first place he robbed them of their inalienable rights to choose their own form of government, and then corrupted them into quiescence."

"But every thing was legalized," interrupted Elliot. "The Emperor submitted to a vote of the people, and he got an enormous majority."

"Yes, he got a majority," responded Trajan, "the basest of the Roman consuls got majorities when they had seized the purple, and, with such appliances as Bonaparte had, it would have been wonderful, indeed, if he could not have snatched an apparent approval from the weak and frivolous and thoughtless mass, intent rather on riches and pleasure than the continuity of their progressive traditions. With the machinery of the ballot in his possession, it was no difficult matter for the schemer who conducted his campaign to get a majority out of forty millions of Frenchmen; even

then he got eight millions only to say 'yes,' and, perhaps, a million ventured to say 'no' knowing what that 'no' implies for them in the way of proscription, obloquy and ostracism. Why am I so vehement in the cause of a stranger people? Because I hold that the natural divisions of mankind should not be in the arbitrary lines of nations. I believe we should be a universal republic, with no jealousies or distrust; that such groups of people as are now called nations should make their own local laws, and that the ocean bounds of the globe should contain but one general system of government. Then we should have no wars, no clashing interests of labor and riches; we should, in fact, realize something of the state that the early Christians foresaw and struggled for."

"Universal socialism, in fact, is the ideal you aim at," said Philip, with a tolerant smile.

"Yes, if you wish to so call it," responded Trajan. "Universal socialism. Since the unity of the race is the mass, and since society is merely a collection of individuals, the effect of one man's voice upon his neighbor should carry the weight of its worth. His theories should count just as far as they approve themselves to the conscience and judgment of an untrammeled majority. The deliberate voice of that majority should be the rule of social existence—as it was when Moses and Joshua led their hosts of socialists living in the simple communistic principles and practices of the patriarchs. The beginning and germ of the doctrines of socialism are found in the teachings of the Nazarene. The essence of it is—'Love thy neighbor as thyself,' or if you prefer, 'Do unto others as you would that others should do unto you.' These two sayings are to my mind the law and gospel of the much despised and perverted socialism which tyrants conjure in hideous forms to frighten the timid and restrain the liberal.

"You must remember," continued Trajan earnestly, fixing his eyes upon Elliot, "that it was part of God's plan of punishment to put a king over Israel, and certainly you

have read the history of nations in vain, if you have not discovered that the kingly office has been a curse to humanity. Why, above all, should Americans uphold, even by silence, such a monstrosity as this emphasized and aggravated travesty of the worst estate of the Cæsars?"

Philip said dryly: "What is it Emerson says about—the inconvenience to the good order of the world, when a thinker is let loose? Reserve your passionate humanities for your poems or your canvas, Gray."

"Even Disraeli advocated regicide in his early works, and Milton was the tongue and brain of Cromwell," interrupted Elliot.

Trajan joined the laugh that followed, responding: "Oh, I'm far from desiring the death of kings. It is not the king who is to blame, as a general rule, it is the people who submit to their punishment. I wouldn't have a limb of this Bonaparte harmed. I would merely set him to work to earn his living, and if he found himself unequal to that, he could find a resource always open to a man of resolution—for death has terrors only for those who create them."

He stammered as he said this, catching Elliot's eye fixed upon him. But Elliot's glance spoke no reproach. He was deeply fascinated with the singular nature developing before him, and he studied every expression that would aid him in comprehending the young man. He was not without a humorous realization that the union was something like that of a horse and an eagle—that each depended on a different element both for movement and faculties.

Young as he was, Elliot had already discovered that no vineyard has a special ray from the sun that ripens. Genius must bring forth its best in an atmosphere common to all endeavor, as the fragrant and ornamental in nature grow in the same conditions as the useful and nutritious.

"I protest, gentlemen, against affairs of state," said Carnot, gayly. "The discussion of politics is the business of

lawyers and rich men seeking the great prizes in life. Mr. Arden, have you seen Nilsson's *Mignon?*"

"Which reminds me," said Elliot suddenly, "that I have a box for 'Trovatore' to-night at the *Italiens*. Shall we go?"

"By all means," said Philip. "I vote for the opera. And you," said he, turning to Carnot—"your evening is free, I know, and you will join us."

"Willingly," Carnot responded.

Trajan looked at Elliot and said: "It will be impossible for me to go with you. I have work that I ought to do while I'm in the humor, and I am in the humor now," he added, in an undertone.

"We should like to have you go with us, very much," said Elliot, "and you know we are not going to dress for the *Italiens*."

But Trajan remained firm, and when the party broke up, Elliot dropped behind and pressing his hand, said warmly: "Remember, my dear fellow, that new friends are strong friends, and that I claim the right of your friendship. I have your address and will be over to-morrow to look at your pictures in the *atelier*."

CHAPTER V.

"TRAJAN'S WAY."

"SO you have met Trajan Gray before, Carnot," said Elliot carelessly, as the former disappeared.

"Yes, Gray and I are old acquaintances. My sister Theo has seen a great deal of him in various ways. They met in America, I believe. He has an uncommon history, or one is made for him, as he has always been something of a mystery in the 'Quartier.' He was the most brilliant pupil in the Beaux Arts—but wayward and obstinate. He

passes among the masters for an impracticable, and among the students for a genius."

Elliott was eager to learn more of his friend, and yet not willing to let the fact be seen to Carnot and his cousin, so he merely said:

"Another man with a story?"

"Well, Trajan Gray's story, so far as I know it, and it is known to but very few, is rather a remarkable one. His father was that rare thing—an Irish antiquary. He was Professor of History at Queen's College, in Belfast. His mother was the daughter of a long line of French *émigrés* who had settled in England during the first revolution, and who had made their way by teaching, so that Trajan derives his Gallic propensities from both father and mother, since the Irish are but the French under another name. The Grays were originally Scottish settled in Belfast. Before his marriage the professor was an improvident bachelor, and found it difficult to change the practices of the scholar. He was devoured by a love for books and a burning patriotism. His life-work was intended to be a history of the Cæsars, which should supplement that of Gibbon, of which he was whimsically fond.

"It was from this devotion to Roman literature that his only child got the rather fantastic name of Trajan. In 1845 the professor, taking too active a part with the Young Ireland party in the ebullition of that year, lost his place in the college, and after a great many vicissitudes emigrated to America. There he became a hack-writer for a number of periodicals, but died before he had been ten years in the country. Trajan was born in New York, the very year of the family's arrival there. The mother and son, left dependent, were put to a great many straits, the boy himself finishing his school days at just the time when most lads begin. But studious and observant from a child, he picked up much by observation and incessant reading, at such moments of leisure as could be found in the various callings

that he was forced to adopt, and at the outbreak of the Civil War he was in a remunerative and comparatively enviable position as proof-reader in a great American publishing house. Here chance threw him into association with an eminent American artist, who was struck by his cleverness in drawing and recommended him to take lessons. In a few years Trajan had perfected himself in all the details of the art, and his mother dying in 1863 he enlisted in the army, served a year and a half with his regiment before Richmond, and was mustered out as lieutenant at the close of the Rebellion, in June, 1865. While in the army he wrote an account of the famous slaughter at Cold Harbor, which, when published in a New York paper, for a moment shook Grant's fame as a tactician. It was copied far and wide. I saw it myself in an article in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*. He was offered a post on the *Oriflamme* on leaving the army, but though remarkably successful did not relish the life of a journalist.

In 1866, when Prussia was marching against Austria, Trajan was sent to the seat of war—but the campaign was ended before he got to the field. His journal was dissatisfied with the result, and his drafts on the office were returned protested. He quit journalism in disgust and put into execution a purpose he had long meditated, to study painting. He entered the Beaux Arts and worked like a madman day and night for two years, enchanting the instructors by his ardor, and surprising his comrades by his rapid mastery of the French, German and Spanish schools.

"His pictures were at once recognized as original ; and he carried off some of the more valued prizes of the *Salon*. He narrowly missed the prize of Rome. It was no secret that he was deprived of it by a very unworthy intrigue. He has passed years in Italy and Germany, and has been several times to America, and it is always said of him, that if he had been born without a tongue there is nothing in art he might not accomplish. But he wounds his best

friends, and repels his most ardent admirers by such vehemences and injudicious outbreaks as you witnessed this evening. I have heard them before, and don't mind them. He is a man of exquisite tenderness of heart, as every poor fellow in the Quartier can attest, for when he has money he never uses it for himself, and his eccentricities of this sort are merely commented on by his comrades with the expression, 'Oh, that is Trajan's way?'"

"Why, there ought to be a good deal in such a man as that," said Philip, reflectively. "I recollect, now that you mention these circumstances, I, too, have heard of his self-denying generosity with those who have no claim upon him."

Elliot said nothing, but he made a resolution secretly that Trajan had one friend at least, who would not be repelled by thoughtlessness in speech or waywardness in conduct. He was, by no means, satisfied with Carnot's sketch of his new friend's history, and meant himself to unravel the strange chain of circumstances which had driven a man of such fine metal to the verge of the rather vulgar destiny of suicide.

At the opera the three young men found the box already occupied by Elliot's mother and sister. Mrs. Arden was a charming, gentle-faced woman, with whom a faint resemblance could be traced in Elliot's face.

"Well, Philip, you have found the runaway," she said, as the three entered, after an affectionate greeting from mother, son and sister. "Elliot, your sister sent for you to your rooms this evening, but the messenger said you had not been there since noon."

"What did you want, Edith?" said Elliot, turning to his sister, as she gave her hand with cordial warmth to her cousin and Carnot.

Without waiting for the response, he continued, with rather a tone of disappointment, "Where are Bella and Aunt Caroline; are they not coming to-night?"

"No," said Edith; "Bella is very much fatigued from an excursion to Sceaux, and Aunt Caroline is suffering from one of her regular neuralgic attacks. They expect you over, however, in case we caught sight of you. We've ordered supper after the opera."

Elliot's interest in the *prima donna* did not seem of the most lively sort, and after the second act of "Trovatore" he said carelessly: "I think I will go and see the invalids. I am tired of "Trovatore," if it is the sweetest opera Verdi ever wrote. One gets tired of too much sweetness."

"That depends a little on the kind, doesn't it?" said Philip maliciously.

Elliot pretended not to hear him, saluted his mother and sister affectionately and, with an *au revoir* to Carnot and Philip, left the box. Reaching the street he took a cab and was rolled rapidly through the Boulevard des Italiens as far as the Church of the Madeleine. Then, turning down the Rue Royale, and past the glittering lamps of the Place de la Concorde, he continued up that enchanting sweep of lights and foliage, crowned in the dim distance by the great shadow of the "Arch of the Star." The cab stopped near the corner of the Rue François I. The young man, ringing a bell, was admitted to the hallway of one of the imposing mansions of this aristocratic quarter. The *concierge* came to the *guichet* as he passed, and it speaks volumes for the charm of Elliot's manner, that even that, at all times surly and repellent personage—for *concierge* is but another name for this—smiled with pleasure and informed monsieur that he was "the welcome one." With a good-humored response Elliott ascended the marble stairs, luxuriously carpeted in heavy purple tapestry, and rang the bell at the massive double doorway of walnut. In a moment it swung open and a man-servant took the young man's hat and gloves.

Conjecturing that the indisposition which had kept his cousin from the opera had not confined her to her room,

Elliot asked the servant where she was. With the elaborate particularity of the French domestic he answered gravely:

"Mademoiselle is in the *salon* with madame her mother. Madame, your mother, and mademoiselle, your sister, are at the opera and left word that you should go there if you came."

In the library he found a young girl seated beside a table with an argand burner at her side, reading, and on a low couch, at a little distance, the figure of a lady reclined. Both looked up in surprise as the door opened, the young girl rose and held out her hand.

"Welcome at last, Mr. Wanderer," said the latter, archly. "If you have not already given an account of yourself, now is the chosen time. We expected you to go with us to Sceaux. I shall never be able to tell you the wonders of the pavilions and the gayety of the dance under the trees."

"Ah! you were at the *fête champêtre*, were you, frivolous young woman? I am surprised that the dragons of propriety permitted you into such disreputable dissipation."

"Why, what can you mean, Elliot?" said a languid, querulous voice, as the young man went over and greeted the invalid. "I thought Sceaux was one of the suburbs of Paris most frequented by the upper classes."

"Well, you know, the resorts of the nobility are not always above reproach, and Bella can tell you that the very place a prudent young person would be wisest in avoiding would be the haunts of those favored mortals."

"Don't tell me that," responded the invalid. "You can not make me believe that people who have grown up with the refined influences of birth and education will demean themselves by mixing with common people in vulgar pleasures. I won't believe it!"

"Very well, auntie, indulge in your admiration for the nobility, and cherish your illusions as long as you can, and

while you can keep at such a safe distance from them as you are, perhaps that will be no difficult feat."

Aunt Caroline could have been heard rather inarticulately reproaching the young man for willful perversion of both her words and sentiments; but as she was fatigued, she didn't propose to set herself right in the eyes of persons for whose good opinion she was really indifferent. While this murmured sarcasm was shaping itself at his expense, the object of it had narrowly missed overturning the argand burner, in an inexplicable attempt to force a chair nearer his cousin than the nature of the conversation seemed to demand, pre-supposing the young girl in the possession of unimpaired hearing. She laid down her book—but said nothing. The young man adjusting himself comfortably in the chair regarded the shining head before him through the delicate wreaths of smoke exhaling from a Turkish cigarette.

It was a charming face that confronted him. Bella's complexion was a rare olive, delicate, transparent, and at times almost pink in its delicacy—with eyes soft, and luminously brown, with such tricks of change as required a long acquaintance to enable one to affirm with confidence their color. Elliot was fond of telling his cousin that she never could be painted, because the artist would never undertake such lips. They were not perfect in outline; they were every thing that is implied in plumpness, save the familiar and soubrette notion. Plumpness effaces elegance, yet the girl would be called, before every thing else, elegant —that is, in repose of manner, musical intonation in the softest of voices and repression in vivacity, which renders a woman at certain moments adorable. It was plain to be seen that the merriness in the eye came from a true poise and mastery of self, which, though rare in woman, is an incomparable charm when found. It is difficult to tell the age of a girl of such peculiar qualities—facial and mental. Bella was in her twenty-first year.—The cousins had never seen much of

each other until the death of Mr. Briscoe, who, having gone to California in "'49," was virtually lost to his family in New York until the completion of the Pacific Railway in 1864—when he returned a fourfold millionaire to die and be buried in the vicinage of his fathers, near the home village in Wyndham county, Vermont. It was not until his Harvard course was done that Elliot, coming home in the flush of a brilliant graduation, found his cousin Bella established with his family in New York. Like most young men of aspiration and no bread-winning needs, Elliot had given no thought to marriage—indeed the subject, had he stopped to reflect over it, would have seemed ludicrously out of place at his age. He protested to his mother that he was going to make a name equal to the distinction of the family, and until then he did not propose marrying. His mother made no strenuous objection to this resolve of her only son—but his sister was at once a declared ally to the project; for, as she often said to her mother in confidence—"There isn't a girl in New York fit for Elliot—he's a prince among men."

"But, my child, he will find plenty of princesses; there never was a fine soul that didn't sooner or later find a congenial one—I shall be well satisfied if Elliot finds a good girl, and he can share his fine qualities with her—he has enough for both." Edith was not quite satisfied with her mother's qualified devotion to the prince, and often confided her hopes to Bella. That young lady, while astutely assenting to her cousin's sisterly panegyrics, it was remarked, avoided any original proposition expressive of her own opinion—a diplomatic reserve which Edith had not stopped to weigh, as a less absorbed advocate would be very likely to do.

Highly as Edith placed her brother, he secretly believed her to be the pearl of girls. One of the sorrows of his life had been the passion of a college friend for the young girl. He had known the youth in college as a gay, dissolute fellow, uncertain in his tendencies and

incapable of the abnegation implied in the love that should win a noble girl. He shrank from interfering in the affair, but a heavy load was taken from his heart when the young man, after months of courtship—sent for him as he was quitting Edith's presence and pressing his hand with husky voice, said:

"Good-by, Arden, old fellow; I'm going to Europe to-morrow. I hate this infernal country."

There were no words needed between the brother and sister. Elliot kissed the young girl's agitated lips and soothed the first sorrow that she had ever known—for she had been entirely innocent of the sentiment which had kept the disappointed lover so constantly by her side. The young men that made up the court of Arden House were never at a loss to understand their relations with the daughter of the family after that. Whether Bella had, with the keener perception of her sex, marked the episode, neither brother nor sister ever knew, but she seemed to have learned the lesson —for even Elliot was made to see, that while he held a high place in her esteem, there were none of the signs that indicated even the incipience of a serious passion.

To some the lesson of life, its mysteries, its impulses, come only from experience; to others the problem seems laid bare like a growth in grace, without words and without forewarning. Such natures are the sweeter, as the man whose career is half made for him is generally more agreeable than the hapless mortal called the self-made man. The thistle of the second generation encouraged by friendly soil, has a more delicate bloom and more shapely stamen, than the rose that springs from a seed blown in the air and from an uncongenial soil. Hardness is the enemy of sweetness; repose is but a thin veneer after a life of hard blows and the ignoble processes which bring about material success. The Ardens were examples of the repose of fine conditions. The fortune that supported the family in luxury, which good breeding kept from ostentation, gave that inbred ease and

refinement which comes from a knowledge of equality among social forces and not the pretention to superiority which too often mars the self-made rich and successful. So far as it is possible to the infirmities of human nature, the Ardens were democrats; that is, they not only believed, but they acted on the faith, that equality exists, and can not be subverted by the accident of wealth or the favor of fortune. Possibly, if put to a severe strain, any one member of the family would have broken down; but that they did not as a family, this history is a proof; for if they had, the events which form its main thread would never have come to me to chronicle.

"You are reading 'Romola' again, Mademoiselle la Savante. I thought you had committed it to heart when we were in Florence last winter," said Elliot, taking the book and looking at the page.

"I thought I was getting the best from the story in Florence, but I have been haunted by the ghost of Tito. I have never ceased to see his beautiful dead face, with the cruel fingers of Baldassarre clutched about the tender neck. Do you know I resent the author's disposal of the charming Greek."

"Tito was a wretched cad. He was a false friend, a faithless husband, a treacherous, heartless son. I could have forgiven him the denial of Baldassarre—for, after all, the old man was not his father, but I should have no compunction for a man that could trifle with such a heart and brain as Romola's!"

"But that is in the nature of man, after all, isn't it?" and the young girl half closed her eyes to avoid the indignant and reproachful glance that was fastened upon her.

"Upon my word, Cousin Bella, I can't imagine where you get such ideas of men. I know none such—out of high-pressure romance, and even there they move with a mechanical and perfunctory action, as though the creation of them rather tried the ingenuity of their authors. Flesh-and-blood

men are perhaps, as Carlyle says, mostly fools, but few men are knaves from disposition, or with opportunities to be any thing else. I'm afraid this foreign atmosphere is making you cynical, or putting ideas in your head that are rather the property of Frenchmen than the expression of our sort of human nature."

"In other words, Elliot, you fancy that a young woman should think of men only in the light of possible husbands, and by investing them with spotlessness from the ways of the world, create that state in them?"

"By no means. I hold simply that a woman of heart and refinement—and one implies the other—should not seek the abnormal. Men may be rascals, women may be insincere and shallow. I am glad to say that I know none, or if I do they hold no place in my mind."

"But for all that, isn't it wiser to admit that there are Titos in the world, and knowing that they are there, deal with them, if we have to do with them, more humanely than the creator of the wretched Greek?"

"No; I, for one, would rather have agreeable mediocrity for *camaraderie* than all the attainments of the subtle, money-loving egoist there—pointing to Tito in the picture of the first mutiny with Romola. Or take another illustration of the same *genre*—I would rather fashion a mate out of a village tow-head than sit on the throne with a Borgia, a Medici, or a Brinvilliers."

"There's nothing of the heroic in you, cousin mine, nor for that matter is there in me, but I am perversely inclined to the idealizing of historical monsters."

At this moment mamma yawned portentously, arose, gathering an ample drapery about her, and coming over to the mantel, adjusted her eye-glasses and examined the clock. "After eleven; I really can not wait for them; I should have been in bed an hour ago!"

"By the way, auntie, I have found just the man you have been seeking—a young American who uses French like a

Parisian; a painter of remarkably fine pictures, which, as he is not the fashion, he can not sell—distinguished in the Beaux-Arts as a draughtsman."

"Who is he?" asked Bella with lively interest. "Some sour-tempered, disappointed young man, I've no doubt, who will make me wretched to look at."

"There is no need of your looking at him," said Mrs. Briscoe, with reproachful asperity. "If he knows French well and can give you the instruction you require in drawing, I don't see what possible interest his personal appearance can have?"

Elliot restrained an impulse to laugh as he pictured the classic face of Trajan and the comments of his unknown client.

"I am not going to give you any idea what he is like. He will dine with us to-morrow, and if we can secure him for a few months I shall consider myself an exceptional ambassador, and you, mesdames, the luckiest women in Paris."

A rumble of a carriage rolling over the paved court announced the opera-party. A minute later Edith entered with Philip Kent and Jules Carnot.

Bella rose and gave her hand cordially to the two gentlemen, expressing lively regret at missing the opera.

"You didn't miss much," said Philip. "Carvalho was in execrable voice. The tenor was lukewarm and indifferent. I remark that of late the *Italiens* doesn't give itself much concern, unless there is a royalty present."

"What have you done with mother?" said Elliot.

"Mamma has gone out to see that we get a reward for the fatigues of the evening—ah, there you are, mamma—there is an inquiry for you. Elliot was afraid we had left you on our way home."

Mrs. Arden laughed cheerfully. She seemed more like the sister of her big son than the mother. She was barely seated when the *portières* were drawn aside at the end of the

room, and the butler, standing in the center, announced in the French fashion :

"Madam is served."

The supper-table revived the animation that the opera overcast. Bella, who was seated between Jules and Elliot, astonished the gentlemen by her familiarity with the cross-currents of the society of the capital.

"I am hungry to go to the country," she said during a lull in the conversation ; "but I hope we shall not go to any of the watering-places in vogue. They differ from Paris only as a section of the Faubourg St. Germain differs from a section of the Faubourg St. Honoré, and both are intolerable to any one who has work to do."

"That reminds me, Elliot," said Mrs. Briscoe. "Will your artist-friend object to leaving Paris—for Bella insists on at least three months of real seclusion."

"What is the mystery?" interposed Mrs. Arden ; "have you adopted an artist, Elliot, to complete the original collection?"

"Oh, I forgot to say that I have been fortunate enough to find a man that will, I think, instruct Bella in the things she yearns to know—providing her whim outlasts the negotiation."

"Who is it?" exclaimed Edith, looking at her brother in surprise.

"A young American, Mr. Trajan Gray."

"What a classic name—Trajan ! why, I shall be thinking of the conquests of the Antonines, the walls on the Euphrates and the pass over the Balkans—to say nothing of the columns in the forum," said Bella, with an air of unconscious pedantry that set the rest laughing.

"I hope this Cæsarian young person confines his learning to his name, Elliot," said Mrs. Arden, "for if he encourages Bella in her present rage for the abstruse she will be companion for neither man nor gods."

"As to that," said Philip, dryly, "there are pedants of

ignorance as well as knowledge, and the time that the work laid out for a fashionable young woman leaves for study will not give much chance for a dangerous profundity. Miss Bella will drink at the Pierian spring, until she feels the need of a more intoxicating draught."

"By Jove, Philip, old fellow, because the sex is antipathetic to you is no reason that you should indulge in generalizations, which, from any other tongue than yours would sound brutal," rejoined Elliot, affecting a tone of admonition.

"Brutal—in the sense that there is nothing so brutal as a fact, perhaps. But learning in women is as discordant as raiment on the lily or foot-notes to a poem."

"I am quite of Philip's opinion," said Carnot, with steady composure. "Learned women are uncomfortable sort of people. I never knew but one. She was a Russian countess, who set up for doctor. She was clever enough in her profession, but her conversation was what the French call academic—quite beyond every body else. She was tolerated, I think, more because of her rank than any thing else. There were few who could resist the distinction of a real countess for family physician. She was a skinny little woman—all cheek-bone and eyes—but she had countless offers, and finally gave her learning and her meager charms to an abstracted member of her own profession—noted more for the fervor of his devotion to music than medicine. She carried on the practice and his clients were generally benefited by the union."

"No woman ever changed the destiny of the world by superior learning," said Philip, "while many women have revolutionized the destinies of the race without it."

"On that basis," said Elliot, "madmen and monks have been the most potent factors in the destinies of the race—from Alexander to Luther."

"Well, young people, if you insist on holding a philosophical discussion you may take your cigars and we will

leave you," said Mrs. Arden, who had been listening abstractedly,

The ladies arose, bidding the young men good-night, and left the room. The trio smoked for a half hour or more, and then Philip and Carnot bade Elliot adieu.

CHAPTER VI.

TRAJAN RENEWS HIS YOUTH.

TRAJAN went from the group in the Café Voltaire that memorable night in May, with the mandate of a new purpose on his heart and conscience. The impetus wrought in him by a few hours' companionship with a nature serene, open and loyal, had begun the workings of a profound change in him, which while it was to involve him in torturing trials and even deadly peril, expanded every virile force in his nature. As he stood irresolute in the dim shadows of the gabled edifice, he regretted that he had quitted the congenial influences of his chivalrous friend. He distrusted the silence of the night. He dreaded the wrenching hand of remembrance tearing at his heart-strings and goading him to the dastard resolution of the day. But a singular syncope had fallen upon his faculties; the pain of the past, numbed by its own unchecked force, gave but feeble intimation of what it had been. The interest of Elliot, his compelling unreserve, brought new images, more active than the pallid shades of wrong and despair that had possessed him. He realized in the brief companionship, the despicable cowardice of his own conduct. He was ashamed of the figure he had made—agonized would, perhaps, be the better expression of his self-abased, present appreciation of his purpose. The more he reflected upon the incidents of the day, the more fatuous, incomprehensible and unmanly his impatience and

supine surrender to his morbid impulse seemed to him. What! a man who had faced death on the battle-field, who had borne poverty and laughed at its sordid shifts: who made a cult of self-denial and a servant of adversity, deliver himself like a brainless *débauché* to the ignoble and sickly impulse of suicide? He burned in a fever of self-abasement.

Nor could he delude himself by the sophistry that faithless love was the single woe he had resolved to fly. He had wickedly persuaded himself that the children of men, divided by warring interests, had no tie in common. That he, having no hold on mankind, the world had no claim upon him. That because betrayed love made life a blank, his hand had lost its craft, his brain its creative resources. That courage and hope gone from him, he should find himself homeless, breadless. That without purpose or place life was not only not worth living, but impossible. For months in the delicious torments of a love, not without hope, he had been unable to hold himself to bread-winning. When the blow fell, what inspiration was there left? The shapes of his pencil, the touch of his brush, no longer responded to the subtle ideas of perfection he had once evoked from the canvas. The end of endeavor came, and it was the fulfillment of the law of life to close the struggle in which he was stripped not only of arms but the forces to wield them. Poverty he had faced; but then ambition's lamps were aflame in the horizon of his hope and he could smile at it. But in the wreck of all he had set his heart upon—what good? Why strive?

Then came a humiliated sense of beginning life anew—a sort of moral ticket-of-leave man. Elliot could not comprehend the just mean of the motives driving him to destruction. Then he wondered if the young man had really understood the sentiment, rather than satisfaction of hunger that had impelled him to pick up the crust?

He felt that he would have been better satisfied if the Samaritan had seen into his soul and had been able to see

that the act was merely a part of the design of death that had filled his mind. To be a beggar—that was the horror of his life up to the very picking of the crusts. He could have gone to a dozen acquaintances and eked out weeks, months, —perhaps years, sharing the reputation of the careless, jolly spendthrifts that filled the quarter. It was from the beginning of such a career of what he loathed as baseness that Trajan had made up his mind to fly. He had known other fellows, clever as himself—fellows, even, who had sold pictures at good prices to rich Americans—fall into the fatal disregard of scrupulousness, and had heard them lightly spoken of, seen them repulsed and avoided by men who in kindness rather than repugnance invented clumsy expedients for avoiding them. For between borrower and lender, it is the lender who generally suffers most poignantly the inability of a friend to repay, though between men of delicacy the misery of the relation is about equal. If the borrower be servant to the lender, the master is the sufferer in the service rendered. For if the two be equal, delicacy forbids transforming the loan into a gift, and circumstances often make it a species of theft. To the hapless borrower it seems such. He begins by observing the most ceremonious behavior and ends in avoiding the man whom circumstances make him wrong. Mutual distrust cements the coldness and the end is hatred on the one hand, and, unless the lender be a soul of exceptional nobility, contempt upon the other.

Trajan had watched piteous dramas of this sort. Indeed he was himself a victim of many of them, for when he had money, all who asked shared it. He had striven to prevent the usual consequences, but he had seen with sorrow and despair that his advances were ill received. He had proved the odious maxim, that there is no wrong so bitter as the doing of a good deed that can not be returned. He walked along the *quai*. The lamps were gleaming—throwing grotesque angles of light half-way over the dark current of the Seine. He even turned into the bridgeway where he had

stood a few hours before contemplating it, as one does the approaching railway train that is to take him on a long journey. His mind had been perfectly tranquil. He had longed for a rest that should not be harassed by the cares investing his days and the anguish of a bitter delusion. He wondered as he leaned over the stone balustrade, how he could have been so mad—for, after all, if the worst came to the worst, wasn't the recruiting station open to him yonder?

But he was forced to own that it was not the fear of finding nothing to do that had made death seem a delicious rest. Trajan, like most of us, when confronted by moral retrospection, insisted on shutting out the real cause of his weakness. He watched the swift current of the river and laughed to himself as he saw the gendarme regarding him furtively. The gendarme, poor man, divined from experience the meaning of the young man's contemplation, and he resolved to spare himself the disagreeable flurry of fishing the slender looking figure from the water, so he made himself very conspicuous to Trajan, as though intimating that while on a question of principle he acceded to the right of any citizen to dip himself in the Seine, he objected to having the scandal of it in his bailiwick. Trajan, saluting him, gravely set out to retrace his steps. At the end of the bridge he almost stumbled over the figure of a child. It was sobbing piteously. Stooping down, Trajan saw a pallid face framed in a mass of curly hair.

"What frightens you, my child?" he said kindly.

The little creature who had cowered tremblingly as Trajan bent over him, reassured by the friendly voice, broke into a passion of sobs, while his large eyes were fastened on his possible friend. Sitting down on the stone step, Trajan drew the waif toward hm. He was very much soiled, but his dress was not ragged nor coarse. When he had mastered his sobbing, Trajan asked again:

"Where are your papa and mamma: why are you in the street so late?" This, however, had the effect of setting

the child into a new outburst of tears. Mastering this presently, and gaining confidence in Trajan, he suddenly said, between his sobs: "I'm hungry—where's maman?"

Trajan colored to the roots of his hair. His heart smote him with a guilty pang. This child, too, was hungry—was he the one to refuse him bread? He felt in his pocket, but suddenly recollected that he had given his last coin to the beggar-boy of the afternoon. The little one's eyes followed the motion of the hand, and his eyes which had brightened, filled with tears as it came out empty. The other felt as embarrassed as a devotee who finds himself penniless when the plate reaches him in church. What should he do? The child was evidently famishing. Useless to take him to the neighboring eating-houses—they made it a rule to refuse all mendicants—besides it was against the law to ask for bread. He suddenly thought of the store behind the bench in the Luxembourg.

"Come," he said to the child; "come with me, and I will find something for you to eat. It was a long walk for a little fellow faint with hunger, and Trajan, his heart tender with the memory of the day, picked up the tired child and carried him in his arms. He was a comely little man of six or seven, with unkempt black hair and large round eyes. He was hardly warmed by contact with Trajan's body before he was sound asleep. On reaching the Luxembourg gardens Trajan placed his little charge on the first *banquette* near the gate, and hastened to the bench, where Elliot had left the birds' bread. It was too dark to see, but he knew exactly the spot and the clump of lilacs. He leaned over the bench and groped for the crusts. But his arm wasn't long enough, evidently, as he felt nothing. He hadn't even a match, and he didn't like to go across the esplanade to ask for one. Climbing over the bench, he kneeled down, and carefully searched to the very roots of the trees. The bread was gone—evidently some hungry dog had discovered the treasure. Bitterly disappointed, he climbed back over

the end of the bench, which, overweighted, tipped and let the young man fall backward. In the scramble he struck the branches of the lilac bush above him, tearing his sleeve and scraping the flesh from his elbow. He brought up sprawling on the ground, his hand resting on something, soft and smooth. He picked it up. As nearly as he could make out it was a thick pocket-case. He got up, wondering how it came there. He could just distinguish at the next bench the form of a woman, but he could not see whether she was alone or not. As he stood thus uncertain, he heard a scuffle directly behind him and the gruff voice of a gendarme, saying:

"It's past the hour for promenading—the gates close in three minutes—be off!"

"But I'm waiting for some one," remonstrated the other, "and I can not go till he comes."

"You must wait outside the gate, then—you can't wait here."

With the wallet in his hand Trajan stopped to hear the end of this dialogue, hoping it would give him a clue to the owner. He asked himself if some one was playing a practical joke, for the wallet seemed to have been thrown on the ground, after he had searched it for the bread. He was positive he had covered every inch under the bushes, or could it have been secreted in the branches and fallen when he rustled them in clutching to stay his mishap? The gendarme, observing him, came up and ordered him to leave the grounds as the gates were about to close. He suddenly bethought him of the woman—could she have dropped it? He advanced toward the seat where she had stood within arm's reach almost of the branch that had stayed him in his descent. She had disappeared. He walked to the lamp in the direction of the gate to examine the wallet. It was as he suspected. There was a bit of cord loosely fastened around it and by which it had very clearly been tied to the twigs under the leaves. The violent shake he had given the branch

when he threw up his arms to stay his fall had, no doubt, broken the slight stems, for vestiges of them still remained in the knot. He felt a guilty sense of unlawful possession of this unexpected treasure-trove, convinced that it had been put there for a purpose. This sense of involuntary purloining suggested giving it to the gendarme; but he was at some distance, beating up the reluctant loiterers lurking in the leafy recesses of the garden. Under the impulse Trajan started toward the direction whence his voice could be heard, his jetsam held far from him as if to keep him from the temptation of examining it. His step was arrested by a wailing little cry, broken by piteous sobs:

"Mamma! mamma! I'm hungry—give me to eat—I'll be very, very good—" sob—sob—sob.

This was an argument that arrested Trajan's uncertainty. There was no pretext for casuistry in that. He knew by experience that an empty stomach was a foe to the refinements of time, place and amenities. He quickened his step toward infantile misery, stronger than abstract proprieties. He lifted the half-unconscious child, who clasped his neck confidingly with his weary little arms. That hug would have braced Trajan to highway robbery. He instantly dedicated the treasure to the child's wants, until he could reach that to which he had a less dubitable title. "Give me to eat," murmured the child, in his pretty French familiarity, his voice faltering. Trajan pressed him to his breast soothingly.

"Poor little fellow! wait and you shall have to eat." He slipped the wallet into his pocket, and with the sensation of a burglar making off with his spoil, fled rather than walked out of the garden. The motion brought the sobs to an end. The child, with the unconsciousness of babyhood to rank or conditions, wound its weary arms around the young man's neck. People turned to look at him as he hurried down the Rue Vaugirard, down the Rue Cherche-midi until, after twenty minutes' walk, which was almost a run, he came to

a halt before a double door opening level with the street, in the Rue du Dragon. He had to set the boy down while searching for his key, opening the door and lighting the lamp. The child was sobbing in its sleep, but was awakened by the sharp ecstatic bark of a small black dog that seemed intent on eating Trajan, while a white cat, so large that it seemed, at first glance, like an untranquil pillow, stood by the fireplace with its back as much arched as a very fat cat aroused at such an untimely hour could be expected to elongate its vertebræ.

"Be quiet, Trip—sh—sh—" admonished Trajan as the dog, discovering baby, set up a short howl of indignant reproach. The cat, too, discerning the new-comer, made as if to accept it as a rat ready for the sacrifice, and began to conduct herself with as little dignity as Trip. The lamp lighted, Trajan lifted the child, and placed it on a short dumpy sofa—to the no small astonishment of Trip and the cat, both of whom claimed this as their own special preserve. Trip began an agitated investigation of the dangling legs, while his companion gravely contemplated the intruder, alternately questioning Trajan with her large yellow eyes, and curling her tail in no end of remonstrances at such scandalous innovation upon the habits of a respectable mother of numerous well-reared kittens.

"Be quiet, you pests," said Trajan, seating himself at the table and tearing open the wallet. It was a rich piece of leather and might contain money; but Trajan's heart sank as he opened it, for nothing but a thick bundle of papers met his eye. There was a note—which he didn't stop to examine. Unfolding the papers Trajan's heart gave a great bound. Bank of England notes! One—two—he grew too dizzy to count. There were a half dozen at least—all of them, to the young man's dismay, of large denomination—£10, £20! He looked them over feverishly. Yes—there was one for £5. That, he might venture to use. Without looking at the note or the other papers in the wallet, he

closed it, put it in a drawer, and locking it, addressed himself to the child. It was still sleeping.

"Trip, you must take care of the baby while I go for the supper, and, Madame Betty, you must take care that you do not practice with your claws on the visitor. Trip, you shall have some meat, and, Betty, you shall have the feast that pampered cats love."

Trip wagged his tail in ecstatic assent and Betty brushed herself in the most ridiculous, wheedling way against Trajan's legs, with an intention, as the dog evidently thought, of tripping his master, for he deliberately backed into madame's face, pretending that Trajan's hands needed kissing. Thereupon madame retired with stately dignity toward the rug, purring in violent agitation. Trajan closed the door softly behind him, and the three friends were left alone. Trip returned gravely to the sofa where the child slept—its breathing broken by short sobs. The dog put its paws upon the body, then climbed up examining the garments interrogatively. Madame, thinking better of her discomfitture, came over likewise, and the two held solemn council over the new comer. Trip having pushed his black nose into baby's face, looked up and announced that it was a harmless sort of an intruder, and perhaps might be an acquisition if taken in hand. Madame, as befits the more cautious nature of her race, began at the feet, carefully abstaining from coming in contact with such squalor. To the evident invitations of Trip to lay her nose against baby's face, she returned a decided negative. If the master chose to indulge such caprices, she knew her place too well to make a scene. But she washed her hands of the interloper. Very well, wagged Trip, you haven't much humanity. I will lie down here, so that when master comes he will see that I have done my best to make things agreeable for his *protégé*. So Madame Betty resumed her place on the rug, this time not so self-possessed, and evidently divided in her mind as to her duty. She sat on her haunches affecting perfect unconcern. But

Trip, from the corner of his eye, his cold nose resting on baby's neck, could see that his old friend was not so well satisfied with herself as usual.

The room was Trajan's *atelier*. Lighted by three dormer-windows, the chamber covered the whole top floor. At one side a high-canopied bed could be seen through the half-drawn curtains that cut the apartment in two. The walls were covered with oblong patches of tapestry, armor, engravings, drawings, medallions, bronze grotesques, busts of famous statuary, portraits, Tuscan vases, Pompeian fragments, and the host of odds-and-ends that a painter picks up in the old world for "a song."

On a high upright easel between the two windows, where the joint of the roof came down, a large canvas, partly in oil, told the work Trajan had been at last. The apartment, though large, was made to look homelike by the sloping roof, which, near the window, came within four feet of the lower sill. The vast floor was liberally patched with rich but well-worn rugs of wonderful beauty of color and design. Every thing in the room was an implement of the owner's art—down to his two friends, Master Trip and Madame Betty. The ears of these two attending sprites detected Trajan's step long before he had gained the last flight of stairs. When he opened the door they were both at his feet —madame forgetting the duties imposed by her age and dignity, and Trip impatient to test the quality of the promised feast. Both were soon gratified by the amplest portions of such meat as Paris butchers reserve for their animal clients —madame decorously finishing her repast with a saucer of milk, a rare delicacy that she thought highly appropriate in such a crisis of self-denial as she had been called upon to undergo. The child still slept restlessly. Trajan left it undisturbed, until having heated some bouillon by his spirit lamp, a smoking bowl stood ready.

"Now, my little man"—said he, taking the boy tenderly in his arms—"it won't do to go to bed on an empty

stomach." The kind tone and the savory odor of the soup brought the little fellow wide awake promptly. A child is the only real philosopher. To him there are no unities of time, place or circumstance. He is hungry. What more natural than to eat. Blessed confidence of childhood—religion itself has no profounder lesson—no more eloquent attestation of a first cause. How thin the fabric of our sophistries ; how attenuated the maxims of the wise, before that innocent trust, that divine assurance ! Trajan's heart swelled as he thought of the contrast between him, confident in his intellect, able to reason, and yet less rational than this artless philosopher !

" What's your name, my child ?" said Trajan, as the boy, with great satisfaction, drank the bouillon.

" Amédée," with a gulp of ineffable contentment.

" Well, Amédée, you must hold the dish while I prepare the second course. You may sit here on the floor, and Trip will keep an eye on you ;—you are not afraid of the dog ?"

Amédée eyed the dog—intermitting the soup for an instant, and then shook his head. Trip considering this a formal introduction, came forward with a cordial wagging of the tail, expressive of a willingness to share the soup or any thing else that might befall in the way of eating. Madame, too, having left the saucer in a shining state of emptiness, came up to the new-comer, picking her way daintily as though to say—" It behooves one to be sociable in one's own home." She established herself on her haunches before the child, blinking amicably. Amédée's interest in the soup gave way to his delight in the new-comer. He had evidently never seen such a cat in his small life. His eyes grew almost as large as the saucer in the corner when Betty had finished her dessert. In ungovernable astonishment he exclaimed :

" But it is not a cat ! "

Betty, conscious that in her quality of feline Jumbo she was entitled to more consideration than this slur upon her

genus implied, moved with impressive dignity to the brightest spot of color on the rug, where, seated upon her haunches, she proceeded to wash her face with large, fluffy paws, casting at intervals glances of freezing indifference and disdain upon the occupant of her favorite corner on the sofa. This unpremeditated toilet was, however, rather inconsequently suspended as the savor of the sliced potatoes preparing over Trajan's stove reached her. She compromised her disdain by abstracted purrs as she rubbed her head upon Trajan's legs, occasionally rearing her stout proportions to a slanting posture as the broiling cutlets emitted little appetizing puffs of inviting odor.

"Yes, little boy," said Trajan, addressing the puzzled skeptic on the sofa, "it is Madame Elizabeth Gray—we call her Betty for short—Trip and I—This," he added, dropping a morsel of the cutlet into Trip's dextrous jaws, "is Monsieur Trip—a very gentlemanly dog. He never worries good little boys who don't worry him ; eh, Trip ?"

Betty and Trip each gave response in the tokens of their various races. Trip turned his head sidewise, keeping an eye on the sizzling cutlets ; while Betty excelled herself in an arch of such prodigious proportions that Boy on the sofa screamed with delight. Then, as though this were not sufficiently expressive, Trip broke into a rondo of short staccato yelps, expressive of enthusiastic corroboration, while Betty's dislocated back seemed a species of buzz-saw emitting a perfect frenzied salvo of purrs.

Understand ? I haven't the slightest doubt the honest pair comprehended every word of the kind fellow who had been their friend ; who had rescued them in the lowest estate known severally to cat-kind and dog-kind. After all, I'm convinced that it is only man—the human-kind—that can hear and not understand heartiness ! He alone can mock and repay with ingratitude, benefaction and love, and the unspeakable goodness that is as natural to the kind heart as rich crops to a fertile soil. Goodness is the first

impulse of every man in normal health—untroubled digestion; and an animal has the same unchanging fidelity in kindly impulses that we infer from a laugh. Whatever other sign a man may adopt to deceive, a laugh is always an honest expression. It tells the state of his stomach.

Don't disdain this homely wisdom, for upon the stomach depends much of the deeds and emprise of life. A disordered stomach—isn't it historical?—brought about Napoleon's discomfiture at Leipsic! If Cassius hadn't been lean and hungry he would never have sent his battalions off for food when young Cæsar was moving in force upon him at Philippi! An odd jumble of illustrations to point the moral of man's inequality—cats, dogs and laughter! Why not? There isn't a more agreeable character in Milton than Laughter, the Jolly Witch holding both her sides. If the woods have voices, and there be texts for sermons in stones, why may not the verities of life be learned in the eloquent honesty of brutes? We can sometimes pardon friends who bore or weary us, but we can never forgive those whom we bore or annoy! Now, the animal who is really our friend, is never bored or wearied by us, and he never bores or wearies us. Therefore, in every sense, a congenial dog is a truer and more trustworthy friend than the frail mortal who reminds us of a repetition of our old jokes, or asks us to pay tribute to his own thrice-told tales of mirth. Trajan had confirmed himself in this creed, and I am but anticipating his own expression of it, for he was fond of setting it forth to his friends. He was fond of saying that Bet and Trip were the only comrades whom he ventured to talk to about himself—remembering that the reserve that men have of talking about themselves to others, is not delicacy nor the apprehension of what others may think, but the fear of laying one's inmost soul open to the gaze of the world, for a friend is after all a gossip who reveals either too much or too little; pride in his friend suggests a caution which is fatal

to that succinct continuity, which alone makes self-confession plausible or tolerable.

Trajan, you observe, was fond of paradoxes. He held that man, like the animal, started out with good instincts uppermost, and that, however fallen, there was an appetent root of congeniality somewhere; that, no matter how hardened or abandoned, there was no heart that a prayer, a tear, an amiable weakness, a kindly folly, would not vanquish in some sort. He had summered and wintered with his two little friends, and he believed that they knew his sorrows and compassionated them in their mute way. They whisked and gamboled about in his joy with motions as eloquent and soothing as the most perfect songs without words. When his heart was light they knew it by his step, and when it was sad they knew it by his very glance.

Amédée meanwhile had satisfied his hunger, and his bright eyes grew heavy. Trajan straightway stripped the poor little body of its clothes, and wrapping the child in one of his own garments laid him in the bed—fast asleep. Then he addressed himself to the mysterious wallet. There were £200 in Bank of England notes, and a letter—with no address—carefully sealed. The mystery of the affair was evidently in the note. Trajan felt that he had no right to open it until he had exhausted every other means of finding the owner. But how was that owner to be found? Through the police? Was there an official credulous enough in all Paris to accept the young man's story? Found on a lilac bush in the Luxembourg gardens! Trajan foresaw that with the summary methods of the French prefecture he would be arrested and held until every crime in Paris had been sifted and its bearings on the wallet traced. Then, too, the abstraction of the £5 would be held as an irregularity, serious enough to warrant exemplary punishment, for treasure-trove has a recognized and enforced procedure with French magistrates.

After weighing over the matter the young man could think

of nothing better than inserting an advertisement in *Figaro*, the general phalanstery of the lost, found, strayed and stolen of Paris. He raised his eyes to the mantel as he came to this conclusion and started guiltily. He saw a reminder of the painful struggle he had gone through on quitting this pleasant refuge in the morning. Getting up he took from the base of the crystal-covered clock a note. It was addressed in a bold, round hand: "Madame Agay, concierge, 29 Rue du Dragon." He took it to the lamp and reached out his hand to hold it over the flame, then drew it back, tore off the envelope and without looking at the inclosure, went to his writing-table, took another envelope, put the note in it, sealed it and wrote in an agitated hand singularly unlike the first superscription in symmetry and repose, "A lesson in life," then thrusting it hastily into a little drawer, got up and paced the apartment!

I have often heard Trajan's friend Elliot tell the story. The letter had been written to the mistress of the house, giving her possession of every thing the poor lad possessed as a legacy, upon which he made the charge of the keeping of his two friends the dog and cat. They were to be nurtured as he had nurtured them, and when dead decently buried as is the Christian fashion throughout the pleasant land of France. This legacy, the young man wrote, he felt happy to entrust to Madame Agay, for she was fond of his two *protégés*, and he knew that she would be the more tender to them for his sake, as she had always been his good friend. Elliot often speculated as to the animals and how much they understood of the droll will, and how near they came to losing their kind patron. I doubt if in all the sacred closets of Catholic Paris there was a soul more humble than Trajan's, as, after hours of thinking—the cat sleeping peacefully on the rug at his feet and Trip renewing the feast of the evening in his dreams—the young man laid himself down beside the rescued waif in the high-canopied bed, as the bells of St. Sulpice yonder clanged out the hour of midnight.

CHAPTER VII.

THE HOUSE OF ARDEN.

TRAJAN, as you see, has nothing of the heroic to justify his historian in presenting him as a personage. He is shown to have lost heart ignominiously at the very time men of the true fiber come out strong. He gave up the combat and was willing to put upon men of better approved constancy the burden of carrying his wounded body from the field. All that he was, and all that his parts fitted him for, we have not yet seen. Fortunately for Trajan the suicidal madness was known only to Elliot. To the healthful mind, to have resolved on the taking of one's own life is but in some degree less guilty than the taking of one's neighbor's. It is only the sorrows of Werther or the woes of the personages of romance that are held excuse for the "bare bodkin" by comfortable human nature. On the stage we adore Hamlet, in romance we weep for Werther, but in real life to touch the scale that measures the unknown balance betwixt the evils we know and those we know not, is to make sorrow a symbol for the world to jeer and condemn. If death were an expiation, its taking off would be heroism and the rash zealot entering, even in thought, the portal of this holy of holies, a consecrated agent rather than a moral specter, reeking with profanation. Trajan had sacrilegiously riven the veil and turned from the immortal mystery, not through repentance, not through sudden realization of his desecration, but by a whimsical impulse! Unless desperate through guilt, swirled into crime, or irredeemably skeptical, how could he, a healthful lad of twenty-five, deliberately take upon himself to anticipate the design of providence? How quit such an atmosphere of intellectual expansion and social seduction as Paris under the Empire? I am conscious of the absurdities in all that he has done and the puling sentimentality of his sudden infatuation for the too-confid-

ing Elliot. Plainly there isn't much of the manly stuff in a young fellow who maunders over a rebuff in love—when he has, to offset the blow, youth, good looks, intellect and the prodigious possibilities of recuperation, presented in such a society as that of Paris, at the apogee of the Empire ! As you have, no doubt, already pronounced, the sentiment is unwholesome, the moral pernicious, to men and women with the sober realities of life pressing upon them for action and solution. The morbid freaks of diseased minds are not themes that make fiction entrancing.

'Twere better and gayer and finer, I own, to present this young man as a conquering, heroic personage, from the moment we discovered him on the bridge, startling the lovely Empress by his lurid glance: to evoke thrills of rapture by plunging him into the Seine in pursuit of some struggling unfortunate, or still more thrilling by an intrepid dash rescuing imperiled royalty from a blood-curdling attempt at assassination. All these might have been set before you very readily, for in those days the avengers of manacled liberty were agog in the streets, and the placid waters of the Seine were often ruffled by the desperate and forlorn ! But the men and women of the novel are no more puppets than the flesh and blood that walk the streets, that toil and triumph or yield to the hard conditions that environ them ! When the consul Caius Julius halted at the turbid Rubicon, the conquest of half the world behind him, the mastery of the whole world, in the resolution that wavered in him, death by his own hand was for a moment the thought dividing that masterful mind ; when the great Frederic had stolen his beggarly Prussian heritage into the ranks of the great kingdoms, his mind was divided between prussic acid and the poetical epistle to Voltaire announcing his taking off ! Indeed surcease of this sort, we see in the lives of the greatest, comes as a boon, in the very threshold of deeds of pith and moment. As you have seen, Trajan Gray's past was marked by a good deal out of the common

fate that befalls men of intellect and high resolves. We shall see that it was no trivial grief that brought him to the despairing pitch in which Elliot found him—for if the heart may break, why not the brain?

It was nearly noon the day after the meeting with Trajan. Elliot after a diplomatic conference with Edith, in which he dwelt with much fraternal unction upon his devoirs toward the *protégé* he was about to bring to the noonday breakfast, set out for Trajan's studio not a little curious to learn the young man's frame of mind. He called a cab and was driven along the banks of the Seine to the Pont Royale, the bridge leading from the noble paved square of the Place de la Concorde to the Faubourg St. Germain, and after a ten minutes' drive, saw the No. 29 in the Rue Dragon.

He was at once enabled to estimate his *protégé's* standing in that archaic abode by the alacrity with which Madame volunteered her politest affirmative that "Monsieur Trage was *chez lui*" with the additional information that his *appartement* was *au cinquième*. The winding stairs were dark and cramped —much like the ascent to a tower—but when the narrow slits that served rather to mark the absence of windows, than answer to them, admitted a thin tongue of light, Elliot remarked that the well-worn planks glistened in cleanly order; that the warped balustrade shone with constant polishing, and though his elbows and shoulders served to keep him in the narrow spiral, not a particle of dust had soiled his dark clothes. He had to pause for breath at the last stair; for, though Trajan's apartment was called the fifth, it really took six flights of long stairs to reach the floor. Through the wider dormer window on the landing the roofs and courts of the whole square could be seen. Elliot had not noticed before the air of age that marked the building. The tiles in the roof were covered with moss, and noisy broods of turtle-doves were strutting and pluming themselves along the peaks and the rims of the eaves. In the distance the green panorama

of Meudon and Mont Valerien and the low hills of St. Cloud shut in the horizon.

In answer to Elliot's low knock there was a sharp bark, and in a moment Trajan stood in the doorway. Elliot gave his hand frankly and the other pressed it with warmth, making place for the visitor on a great arm-chair near the easel.

"Trip, you scamp, get down."

That unceremonious personage having at once accepted Elliot's knee as an eligible point of vantage to study his physiognomy. Trip, glancing over his shoulder and signaling Betty with his tail, proceeded to plant his two paws full on his new friend's shirt front, and making advances of an osculatory intent, that Elliot evaded only by an uncomfortable elasticity of back and neck. Betty, not to be outdone in cordiality, rubbed her head and shoulders with friendly zeal against the young man's ankles. "These creatures are ruined as to behavior," Trajan laughingly explained, "yet they don't often conduct themselves with such effusive warmth to strangers—"

"That proves that I'm a kindred spirit. I'm not given to cats, but I have known a good many dogs that I am proud to call my friends, so don't trouble yourself: I feel rather flattered at the mark of confidence, for a dog, like a woman, judges by instinct, and, of course, it stimulates my *amour propre* to be received on such terms on my first visit."

Trip's efforts to touch Elliot's cheek were finally rewarded, as this proper sentiment was uttered, and then, with an air of triumphant satisfaction, he leaped down and stood at Trajan's feet, as if solicitous to learn whether there were any other evidences of distinguished consideration he could lavish on the newcomer.

"There's a rat under the bed, I'm perfectly sure, Trip, and you ought to show Mr. Arden how you can catch it." Trip regarded the mysterious recesses through the curtain, somewhat incredulously. He cocked his head first on one

side then on the other, yelped interrogatively; then making a dive for Betty, who sat sagaciously blinking at Trajan, affected to be on the point of mistaking her for the alleged rat; then thought better of it, and skurrying across the room halted as he reached the curtains, and with an indescribable motion of head, tail and shoulders, signified to Betty that it was her duty to lend her fine sense of smell to the important quest. But Betty turned her head as one who should say, "Silly thing, don't you know that any rat with an ounce of sense knows enough to know that daylight isn't a time to seek the cheese or bread box?"

When the demonstration of the animals gave an opportunity, Trajan broke into an expression of wonder that Elliot had come. He had made up his mind he said, that a sober after-thought would have warned him of the imprudence of pushing the acquaintance further. That the world would rate his conduct as silly or sentimental, and a young advocate couldn't afford to set out with such a reputation.

Elliot, whose eyes had at first wandered about the large chamber in almost reverent admiration, as the exquisite artistic effects of draping revealed themselves in the unequal light, turned his gaze full upon the speaker as the sense of what he at first took for raillery became clear to him. He moved with impatience, however, toward the end—uneasy and half indignant. For a moment it came into his mind that Trajan had lost his senses; that the brooding which had driven him to the terrible resolution of the day before had affected his intellect. For Trajan spoke without excitement, apparently without emotion, rather as one describing some fantastic episode entirely disassociated from himself. It was no longer the Trajan of the day before—without the previous experience of him Elliot would have taken him as one of the gayest and most flippant Bohemians of the Café Procope. Gay self-assertion delighting in paradox, with no more serious care in life than a fragile *amour*. He was at

a loss how to reply. He dreaded bringing the young man back to the somber melancholy of the day before. He was afraid to enter into explanation—for Elliot, though young, knew that a friendship was writ in vapor that begins in assurances, and is built on protestations. He felt himself strongly drawn toward Trajan. He felt that it would be easy to become tenderly attached to him. Yet his nature shrunk from saying or showing it as an indelicacy. The friendship of men he held to be like the leaves of a delicate plant—breathed upon, touched, they became tarnished, faded, and odorless. The silence lasted for some minutes, and Trajan, surprised that his volatile banter evoked no response, asked :

"You are convinced that I am right?"

"I am convinced that you are singularly wrong-headed this morning, and by no means the clever fellow your friend represented you to be. But I am not going to enter the lists to fight the specter you have conjured. I am come to take you to breakfast, and when you have shown me these wonders of yours we shall barely have time to reach the Rue François I."

"Then you still persist in the wild project of engaging me for drawing-master?"

"Unless you refuse; but I hope you won't, for I am counting on getting no end of benefit from you during the vacation. We are going, as I believe I told you, to some quiet retreat near Paris, where I can make use of the law library, and you can continue your painting, if you are so minded. I declare I feel like turning painter myself in such a charming old place as this. I never saw a more perfect *atelier* in Rome, where some of the foreign artists have lavished fortunes in *bric-à-brac*, tapestries, and that sort of thing."

While speaking, Elliot had got up, and began examining the mural decorations.

"Why," he exclaimed, taking a bronze medallion in his

hand, "there is enough value in this room to buy a farm. I—"

He paused and colored.

Trajan, standing by his side, his hands in the pockets of his short jacket, added with serenity:

"You can't imagine why a man should talk of starvation with these objects of value in his possession? It's very simple. In the first place, there is not an object of intrinsic value in the whole lot. I picked them up in out-of-the-way places, and the sum total of their cost was not $200. If I were forced to sell them I couldn't get a third of that. If I were forced to buy them I should have to pay perhaps ten times that. Take those medallions, for example. They are genuine antiques. I gathered them in out-of-the-way villages from Capri to Ferrara on a walking tour the second year I was in Europe. These tapestries I picked up in Dalmatia and Venice. The carpet rugs I got in Egypt last year. The busts, in small towns in Italy where tourists never penetrate. I paid for many of them in sketches for altars and town halls. In others by writing letters for honest peasants. The fine old chests you see yonder, carved, as wood is no longer carved, I got for working as a field-hand in Tuscany, and I packed most of my treasures in them for transportation to Paris. This writing-desk, which is also a sort of wardrobe, I got in Perugia, from a charming old priest, for furbishing up the sacristy, for I can do a little carpentering. As to selling them, the very thought maddened me, and, beside, they were intended for a sacred purpose."

Elliot turned his face to the window. His voice trembled slightly as he said:

"You've been reading Balzac too attentively and have fallen into the unwholesome spirit of the French. Real men do not do this sort of thing now — out of novels. A week from now you will look back on this business as not only weakly morbid, but un-

manly and even immoral. For, even taking life at your own estimate, it ought to be precious to you. With youth, health and gifts—there is nothing a man of talent should shrink from. Insanity alone can account for the frame of mind I found you in yesterday, and I mean to hold the event over you as a rod. That I believe is the function of a friend, to remind one of his frailties and encourage his foibles? Nothing can condone such folly as yours, my friend, but works. And the first one is to dress yourself, and hasten, too, for my mother is a tyrant, about breakfast, and you will enter the house under very bad omens if you keep that important event waiting."

Trajan excused himself to dress and retired to the alcove. Inside the curtain he kept up a brisk conversation with Trip, who seemed to preside over his master's toilet, for he referred questions of this delicate nature to his superior taste:

"What do you say to this neck-tie, Trip? too crumpled—I think so myself; this white and black too dismal—I quite agree with you. We'll try this with small purple dots to match with light waistcoat and trowsers and dark coat. As we are going into the company of ladies we must be gay—eh, Trip? How about the shoes? Have you seen to their cleaning? You are growing neglectful, Trip. How can a great genius be expected to brush his own shoes!" In a few moments he reappeared, the *négligé* jacket of the artist replaced by the garments he had enumerated to his canine confidant. As he came forward he was metamorphosed in every way. His hair still retained the careless air befitting the artist, though it was not the incongruous curtain reaching the collar by which the artist race signalizes its *métier*.

"Well, Madame Betty, do you approve?"

Madame Betty had been contemplating Elliot as he moved from one object to another, opening books and turning over the drawings. She yawned amicably as Trajan came from the curtained alcove fastening a cuff-button, and scrutinized the *ensemble* with deliberate gravity; then in testimony of

unreserved approbation, upreared her fluffy back into a perfect parabola, rubbing her head and shoulders with a joyful, bounding motion against her master's trowsers.

"Madame Betty's approval gained, I think I may venture the scrutiny of your family council," said Trajan, gayly.

Elliot, bending to fondle Trip's expressive ears, murmured without looking up, rather in continuance of some previous remark, than in response: "Yes, one may trust friends like these—they, at least, have no motive to deceive."

"I don't know about that; Madame Agay declares that Betty maintains a surreptitious supervision of the larder, which is not without its influence on the cost of living, and that though Trip takes no part in the forays, he reconciles it with his conscience to share the spoil!" During the drive to the Rue François I. the friends were strangely silent. Trajan was thinking of the transformation twenty-four hours had wrought in his life and purposes, and Elliot was wondering whether Bella would repel his friend by some inexplicable caprice.

The friends had reached the Rue François I., and Trajan's mind had slowly retraced the events of the last twenty-four hours. He had not, until he found himself seated in the Victoria beside Elliot, reflected on the casual covenant of the night before. His mind had been on a strain so tense that when the relief came in solicitude for Amédée, he had wholly forgotten the proposal of Elliot in the Luxembourg garden and his own assent. Had he considered it a moment, he would have shown his friend that there was no need for his turning tutor to gain a livelihood. With the changed conditions and the new impulse given him by the events of the day, he felt equal to the slow work of painting and the small rewards it brings in Paris. He had concurred in Elliot's suggestion, because it promised to take him into a new atmosphere, to give him a chance to know and be known by his new friend—to remove him from the old life, which had proven insupportable. But now he had new

interests. He must prove to Elliot that he was worthy the impulsive confidence he had given him. He had assented to the proposed tutorship in the glow of an almost passionate adoration for the kind young fellow who had come between him and his madness. An inexpugnable compunction held him back from exposing his bruised spirit and passing paralysis even to Elliot. He had shrunk from the sight of those he knew familiarly, for he knew the estimate put upon him.

He was conscious that he was not taken at his worth, and he resented the careless judgment of his neighbors and comrades, as the actor who is cast for comedy resents the denial of his equal fitness for tragedy! He had pursued his career with a set purpose to conquer the world in his own way. Alas—like all of us when we are young—because he felt his own way to be the best suited to his powers and temperament. When the collapse came he dreaded the gibes this tacit acknowledgment of his error would draw upon him from sympathizing friends! He elected rather to drop out of the contest than face the Philistine chorus.—"I told you so!" He was at the time of life when ardent natures who ponder deeply on the world and its ways regard the accidental as immemorially preordained, the trivial as vital—a time when the pendulum of resolution swings the whole circuit without producing any analogous action on the dial of the mind. He felt bitterly, that had he lived a career of profligacy or improvidence he would have escaped the esoteric judgment of his fellows and found more cordial countenance. Living in books and his art, and the sort of introspection such a life implies, he was no more fitted to assert himself than the white blackbird in the fable, when it fell among its sable kind and was reviled because its plumage was white! When the Victoria stopped and the young men were passing into the Arden doorway, Trajan laid his hand on Elliot's arm and said with painful constraint:

"Forgive me—but I think I am venturing more than I can carry out. I—I—haven't the qualities that would

make even a tolerable instructor. To be of service to your kinswoman, I should require patience, adaptability—which at best I do not possess. Furthermore," he added, blushing crimson—"is it wise, is it prudent, in you to bring an entire stranger into relations involving something of intimacy—into your family? You know nothing of me—or but little, and that not likely to commend me to your kinswoman for the work she wants. No—no—let us dismiss this project. You will know me better by and by. I shall be able to resume work now and make up for lost time and then you can present me to your family as a man who has achieved something. Let us stop before this becomes a mortification and embarrassment to both of us—"

"I don't comprehend you at all"—said Elliot, who had been listening restively, in a tone almost irritable. "You are as absurd to-day as you were mad yesterday. It is association with folks of a different sort from the Quarter fellows you need. Meet my mother. Ah, Gray—when you know her, my cousin, my sister—Kate McNair—then you will see life in its true horizon. I believe I should go mad if I didn't have my mother and sister to counteract the cynicism of the 'Quarter' spirit. Trust me, I know what is best for you just now—beside," he added, coloring charmingly—an adorable trick this kind lad had, "I am the head of the Arden family and what I command all its members affirm—just wait until you see my patriarchal sway"—he added laughingly, "and you will have no distrust."

"Ah, I have no distrust of you—you are—"

"Never mind me—what you need," continued this youthful mentor in a convinced tone, "what you need is the influence of good women." Trajan winced and shivered perceptibly. "I don't mean that you have to do with any other—what I mean is that you need the friendly interest of such—the atmosphere that good women throw about all who come near them—even the least intellectual. It is better for a man, I believe, than this perpetual seclusion among

books, paintings, or the shadowy idealism of art. A month in the region of the gentler humanities, that women alone realize, will restore you to mental balance, which, I am forced to say, you do not possess at this moment. Say no more," he added, seizing Trajan's arm. "I'm a very domineering fellow, and when I take a thing in hand it goes through.—

"The truth is, Gray,"—he added, solemnly,—"you ought to fall in love. That keeps a fellow in mental and moral equilibrium. There's nothing in books, art, bench, bar, or what men strive for like the glorious abandonment of love.—Ah—pardon my folly !—Have I pained you ? I—I didn't dream—" Then, as Trajan, with a pleading gesture and ghastly face, turned from him, he cried, "forgive me, I didn't realize I was paining you—I never imagined—I understand all now," and he pressed Trajan's hand, who still stood with averted face.

"There's nothing to forgive. You touched a fresh wound. Let us dismiss the subject. I will be guided by you. I shall enjoy the sense of irresponsibility in acting as you dictate."

The young men found Mrs. Arden and Edith in the drawing-room. Mrs. Arden gave the guest her hand with cordial welcome, while Edith's manner showed a kindly interest in her brother's friend. Trajan thought he should have recognized Mrs. Arden as Elliot's mother, even if he had not been told. Mother and son had the same large, round, violet blue eyes, the same light hair, and of the same fine texture. The mother's features were more uniform and delicate than the son's. The jaw not quite so round, nor the nose so straight. Mrs. Arden's age might have puzzled even her own sex. Were her grown son not in the room she might have been Edith's elder sister. Her voice was of the quality heard among New England women, more particularly Boston. Trajan thought he had never heard his native tongue spoken with such melodious softness. There was a piquant contrast between the roseate clarity of the mother and son, and the semi-brunette tone of the daughter.

Elliot's eyes were a dark gray, turning into light brown under sudden emotion or enlivened interest. As became a maiden of her years, Edith was shrinking in the presence of strangers, unless Elliot was by, when she generally gave evidence of tact and sprightliness. In her devotion to that darling of the household, she would have denied every one of her traits, to the standing scandal of the domestic régime. She leaned caressingly on Elliot's arm as she said to Trajan:

"Mamma was quite sure, Mr. Gray, that you would miss breakfast, under Elliot's guidance. He has become very naughty about home engagements since he took an apartment in the Latin quarter. This family will therefore look upon you as a saving influence upon our bad boy. Mamma particularly will show you signs of her favor if such influence continues to prevail."

"Yes, Gray," said Elliot, pinching his sister's ear, "Madame, our mother, is the tyrant of this household. She carries the rod by night and day. Had we entered the house a minute after the serving of the breakfast, I should have been led out to one of the household keeps, whose keys you may see upon madame's girdle upon which she tells over our sins as saints their prayers upon a breviary."

"My son proves that he is not wholly wasting his time in the law school," said Mrs. Arden in her gurgling soft voice, and shaking the keys at the maligner. "My children and their cousin, who lives with us, have made their own code for the inmates of this house. Our old-fashioned home customs are no more known than the frocks and fashions of our grandmothers. I make a feeble stand at punctuality, which was a law of my husband's business and home life, and against that these young people are always in more or less open rebellion."

"The heir to the throne is never in rebellion ; it is called opposition," said Edith, adjusting her brother's sleeve-buttons.

"Yes," added Mrs. Arden with comic gravity, "this young

gentleman who passes as the head of the house is its most disorganizing 'influence.'"

"That is when not in disgrace and banishment," said Elliot, laughing.

"Self-exile can hardly be called banishment," said Edith audaciously.

The conversation was interrupted by the entrance of Mrs. Briscoe and Bella. While Trajan was bowing to the ladies, the curtains were drawn at the end of the further apartment. A servant entered and announced, "*Madame est servie.*"

Mrs. Arden took Trajan's arm and led the way through the suite of sumptuous drawing-rooms to the breakfast table. The rare instinct of intelligence and taste, marked the details of this transplanted home. The luxurious richness gave a sense of tranquillity and well-being even to the stranger. Trajan thought to himself that it was no wonder Elliot was such a rare and lovable nature under the influences of such a mother and among such surroundings; for there is as subtle a character in the profusion that wealth enables its possessors to command, as there is in the expression that great knowledge gives the mind the power to convey. It is not a difficult thing to give an air of refinement to walls, floors, and furnishing, but there is something more required to make the house of the flesh habitable to the forms of the mind. With all their artistic instinct, the French do not realize this. Their luxury is depressing and uncharacteristic.

The breakfast room was in odd contrast to the magnificence of the French *salle à manger*. Soft congenial colors prevailed in carpets, walls, and furniture. The frescoed walls were hung with etchings and engravings of modern masters. One engraving only broke this rule—Raphael Morghen's Aurora, an artist proof from the original in the Rospigliosi palace.

Trajan wondered if the architect of all this ideally

arranged interior was Elliot. His admiration was so strongly visible in his face that Elliot said:—

"My mother and cousin planned the furnishing, Gray—do you like the house?"

"It is an ideal of a civilized interior," said Trajan simply.

"There, mamma," said Edith, "praise from Sir Hubert —Mr. Gray is a painter!"

"I'm afraid that's satire, Miss Arden," said Trajan coloring—"artists are wretched hands in adjusting household furnishing."

"That can't be true in your case, Mr. Gray: Elliot has been telling me of your wonderful studio," replied Edith eagerly.

"Mine is a very poor affair compared with those of the great artists in vogue,—you have doubtless seen some of them. They are very glad to have visitors," replied Trajan.

"We've never been in a studio—thanks to the negligence of the head of the house," said Miss Briscoe. "He has perjured his immortal soul repeatedly by promises to take us to Barbison to see Corot's and Rosa Bonheur's. Can we not see yours, Mr. Gray?"

"I'm afraid it would not repay you for the trouble in getting to it, but if you care to go you shall be made welcome," said Trajan gravely.

"Madam Betty and Trip are well worth a visit," cried Elliot. "You've no idea what an interesting family Gray has about him."

"Models?" asked Bella, looking at her cousin inquiringly.

Elliot laughed—"Yes—models of fidelity—Gray would call them. I recommend you to try your hand on them—in emulation."

"I thought Philip was to breakfast with us?" said Mrs. Arden, looking at her son.

"Philip is an uncertain quantity just now. His latest freak

is a trip to Norway—where I suppose he will gather data to refute Buffon."

"My opinion," returned Bella composedly, "is that Philip is going to Norway, if he goes, because there's six months night there—he finds the light of day here too searching for his dark deeds."

"Do you know my nephew, Philip, the person these cousins are lampooning in this wicked way, Mr. Gray?" asked Mrs. Arden, turning to Trajan.

"Yes, I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Kent last night. He was one of the party that dined with your son in the Café Voltaire. I can attest that these are calumnies. I thought perhaps he might be touched with philosophic misanthropy."

"Oh, he's any thing but a misanthrope, and I fear not philosophic. He's much given to shading his own merits. His rôle just now is the repression of Miss Bella's raptures —who for that reason has declared war on him and never intermits hostilities," cried Elliot, beaming placidly at his cousin.

"But wars are only undertaken for conquest, or revenge. Under which cartel has Miss Briscoe declared?" asked Trajan turning to that unwarrior-like young person.

"Vengeance and extermination," said Elliot, "since Philip has long since laid down his arms and sued for—peace."

"I don't concede Mr. Gray's assumption," retorted Bella, "there are wars for sentiment, as when the world marched to the Crusades, and when Napoleon III. fought for Italian unity."

"But I protest, Miss Briscoe," said Trajan, "these instances confirm my proposition. The Crusaders marched to retake the Holy Land, the Bonapartes to avenge Waterloo and annex Savoy and Nice."

"Plainly religion and glory incited both; these are sentiments. Without that men wouldn't face death. The senti-

ment of glory incites one man to battle, another to write a great poem, another to paint a great picture, and to my mind," she added, smiling deprecatingly—"the glory of combat is greater than the glory of art!"

"Well, are we to understand that it is the glory of combat that incites you to war against the Pagan Philip?" inquired Elliot maliciously.

"The glory of chastening conceit and the religion of woman's reason," laughed Bella undauntedly.

"Speaking of war, Mr. Gray," interposed Mrs. Arden, "are we likely to have war?"

"I don't think Bonaparte weak enough or mad enough to go to war now; that would be too good fortune for his enemies to count on, as France is notoriously unready."

"I am selfish in the matter," added Mrs. Arden, "for we are settled here for the year. But if war should break out we could never remain in a city so excitable as Paris. The Carnots tell us that secret societies of revolutionists and communists are ready to rise so soon as the soldiers leave."

"I think that's true," said Trajan seriously, "but at the same time I see no danger for strangers in any event, especially for Americans."

"Well if war does come I hope we shall be here," said Bella, who had listened attentively. "Do women take part in modern wars, Mr. Gray?" she added suddenly.

"As this war, if it comes, will be largely the work of women, or a woman, it is only fair that women would take part," answered Trajan laughing.

"Why what do you mean? Has Bismarck or King William satirized the Empress, as Frederic libeled Pompadour, and are we to have a war in the nineteenth century to avenge a bad epigram, as they had in the eighteenth?"

"Ah no—nothing so humorous or sentimental as that. The Pope has appealed to the Empress and the Empress is bent on humiliating Prussia."

"There's a chance for your warlike ardor, Bella," cried

Elliot. "Proffer your arsenal to the Empress—you can not satirize Bismarck. So that between you and Philip, the Arden family, like the lady in the ballad, will be made famous by the pen or glorious by the sword."

"Glory or the sword is a good cue for me to enter on," interrupted a hearty voice, and Philip appeared in the room. "Don't disturb yourselves at all, I have breakfasted, but to keep the peace I will join in the coffee and a cigar—Apropos of what stirring theme were you citing the troubadour's song, Elliot?"

"It is all along of a maid who would go to the wars and a scribe who would write a book."

"I know of no maid of such a sanguinary turn of mind I'm sure—and as for the scribe who would write a book, I hope he has not made enemies among the critics. It is not yourself I hope, that thinks of turning scribe? or do you contemplate a volume on The Reversion of Retainers—a subject upon which you should write well as you know nothing of it."

"Philip, don't encourage these young people; they have been traducing you," interposed Edith. "I'm glad you've come to confound Bella—she delights in speaking evil of the absent."

"Far be it from me to deny a woman her rights," cries Philip—with a bow to Bella.

"A truce to this raillery, children. What about the country plan? Kate is at Crécy, and at last we have decided to take the villa there. She says that the house is comfortable, though large enough for a German court. The gardens are ample, indeed they are spacious as a park. The surroundings are all that could be desired and, for a wonder, far surpass the agent's circular. The Marne flows through the village ten minutes' walk from the gates. The village is sleepy and ancient, and Bella and Edith were charmed with the place. I, however, shall die of ennui, unless Elliot keeps his promise to fill the house with his friends."

"Hunting and fishing?" asked Elliot.

"In abundance. In fact, the village seems to do nothing but fish," said Edith.

"And as for hunting and sketching—I foresee," added Mrs. Arden, "that the younger members of the company will have ample diversion."

"As to the sketching," said Edith, "I shall be surprised if Bella doesn't turn out an Ary Schæffer or a Rosa Bonheur."

"Do you know any thing of the place, Gray?" asked Elliot, "you have knocked about the suburbs a good deal."

"Yes, I know Crécy very well. I lived in the adjoining village, Cuilly, all one summer and autumn. I know of no more picturesque landscape in France."

"How far is it from Paris?" asked Elliot.

"It is twenty-three miles to the eastward and four miles from the railway. You are as isolated as in the Adirondacks," said Trajan.

"Crécy—Crécy," said Philip musingly. "That's not the place where the Black Prince with King Edward's army of thirty thousand overcame one hundred thousand Frenchmen and captured three kings?"

"This is a case where a little knowledge is not out of place," interrupted Bella maliciously. "I'm surprised, Philip, that you don't know one of the most interesting places in history. The Crécy where the Black Prince took the motto from the crest of the King of Bohemia—*Ich dien.*"

"Such knowledge, Bella, is not only dangerous—it is disheartening,—for it reminds one how far he has gone from his school days and the interesting scraps of universal history that make most mark in the youthful mind."

"Perhaps Bella's knowledge is due to the fact that we were near the real Crécy last year in Normandy and passed within ten miles of it at Abbeville—don't you recollect, mamma?" explained Edith.

"I don't recall it," said Mrs. Arden. "It's more im-

portant to find out about our Crécy. You think, Mr. Gray, that we shall find it a tolerable seclusion for a few months?"

"I am sure of it—that is if you don't seek gayety. The charms of the surrounding country are indescribable. There are but few neighbors—an Orleans prince has a château a few miles from the village, and the famous show palace of the Rothschilds, Férrières, is but three miles distant. There are, too, what is very rare, so near Paris, large tracts of woodland accessible to the public, where the villagers hold charming midsummer fêtes. There are innumerable excursions worth making. Perhaps the most interesting of them is Meaux and the forest of Fontainebleau—a few hours' drive."

"Then our leap in the dark has landed us in a sort of earthly paradise," said Bella with animation. "I long to be off at once."

"We shall be installed by the end of the week, if Elliot will bring his frivolous mind to the business of settling with the agents here," remarked Mrs. Arden placidly.

"Then you may count it done, madame. My maxim is never to put any thing off that is going to result in a good time,—unless something promising a better turns up."

"I'm afraid that's your practice whether it is your maxim or not," said Mrs. Arden, rising from the table. The gentlemen remained when the ladies withdrew, and the servant served Chartreuse and cigars.

"I say, Phil,—what the deuce takes you to Norway? You'll have a much better time out there at the Crécy that the British didn't capture. We shall be very jolly. Gray is to stay the summer and I have invited relays of the law fellows. Mother has a long list. We shall be quite a colony and self-dependent for amusement. You'll be much wiser to come with us."

"What, and falsify Bella's improvised natural history of the country?"

"Bella, I'm afraid, would make a joke on her own

funeral," said Elliot laughing. "Or her wedding," added Philip naïvely, yawning.

"Elliot," said Edith suddenly returning, "when you have finished your smoke and talk, bring your friends to the library. Mr. Carnot and his sister are there. Theo has just come from St. Cloud; the Imperial family have settled there for the summer, and Theo says we're to have invitations for the *fête champêtre* in July. Don't be long—we shall expect you."

Elliot by chance caught a glimpse of Trajan's face, when his sister mentioned Theo's name. He had risen and was examining an etching. His lips were compressed and his eyes glistened in an unaccountable way. So soon as Edith left the room, Trajan turning to Elliot, said with some agitation in his voice:

"I must be off—make my homages to your mother and apologies to the other ladies."

"Why this sudden need of haste? You, a deity of the realm of delight, where time has no dial nor any manner of compulsion! You must really make your adieux in person. I refuse to charge myself with them," said Elliot, uneasily.

"You would do well to take Elliot's advice, Gray," said Philip, with more animation than he usually threw into his accent. "Theo Carnot is a woman well worth meeting. She's to the average run of her sex what the heroes of Lafontaine's fables are to ordinary animals. She's the most remarkable creature I ever met, which perhaps isn't saying much, but every man that meets her says the same thing. I count the day lost, that does not give me an hour of her enchanting company."

Trajan turned toward the window, saying in a low suppressed tone, "I have met Miss Carnot. I quite agree with you that she is a remarkable person!"

The manner rather than the words suggested something to Elliot. He was convinced that he held the clue of

Trajan's extraordinary conduct of the day before. "Remain here a moment, Gray, I'll be back."

Philip resumed: "I have seen that young lady in the most trying situations, where it exacted wit and self-command to hold her own, and I never saw her flinch. The *haute monde* adore her. She is the soul of the wittiest salons of the Faubourg St. Germain, where, as you know, an untitled divinity does not count for much. But she commands the *pas* before the quarterings of the greatest houses. If her wealth were in proportion to her spirit, she could marry a reigning prince—indeed I'm not sure that she won't as it is."

"Yes," said Trajan, abstractedly, "the lady is singularly gifted. I taught her drawing, and she could achieve a fine place with her pencil if she were happily forced to follow it. But she is as ambitious as she is able."

"It's curious, too. She has the courage of an Apache. I saw her in the Bois, when a party of the court were thrown into consternation by an unruly horse. One of the ladies, Mademoiselle de Valoury, was unseated and fell head downward from the saddle. The men were—as Frenchmen usually are in emergencies—helpless, and the poor girl in imminent danger of being dashed against the vehicles. Miss Theo shot out from the melée, loosening her foot from the stirrup as she darted on, and as she reached the flying horse, caught the bridle, slipping to the ground at the same time and holding her own horse as a support, brought the other brute to a sudden check. I was in a cab and at her side in time to lift Mademoiselle from her dangerous position. By the time the group had reached us, Miss Theo had restored her friend to consciousness. You can imagine the vogue such a bit of self-possession gave the American. It was told the Empress, and that sympathetic soul declared that the heroine deserved the Legion of Honor, and I am told proposes establishing an order *des dames!*"

"Yes," said Trajan absently, "she is a woman of intrepid courage."

"We regret that you must go so soon," said Mrs. Arden, at this moment entering. "We had hoped that you would join us in a little expedition to Vincennes, where we propose passing the afternoon. — You, however, have broken bread with us and we cherish the cult of the Arabs on that sacrament. Elliot's friend is always welcome here," she added, with a kindly glance at the young man.

"To be your son's friend is a great happiness for any young man," said Trajan, fervidly, "and to be welcomed by his family is a privilege that I shall not abuse," he murmured, hardly knowing what to say.

Elliot returning at this moment, accompanied the young man to the door, and as he left him at the head of the staircase, said, pressing his hand affectionately :

"You mustn't be surprised to see me running in on you at any time. I am at the disposal of the family this afternoon, but if I can manage, I shall be with you in the evening. I have volumes to say to you, and I mean to be a taskmaster as exorbitant as Prospero to Ariel, until you have worked out the problems set for you by your own destiny ! "

"I shall be a Caliban rather than an Ariel," said Trajan, smiling, "and I'm afraid that you'll find me as discordant an agent as the son of Sycorax."

"Well, even in that rôle, your best plan will be complaisance, for you know the tree was always ready to imprison Caliban when he was unruly ! " The young men separated. Elliot watched the retreating figure until he had passed out of the vestibule and returned slowly pondering Trajan's latest inexplicable freak.

"What do you make of him ? " asked Philip, with a show of interest.

"How make of him ? "

"Is he the eccentric Carnot represents him? By the way, how did you fall in with him?"

"Oh, he knows many of our fellows," replied Elliot evasively. "As to eccentricity, he's no more eccentric than you or I."

"Humph! that's rather equivocal. I don't know so much about myself, but I can affirm that some of your impulsive exploits would make a strong case before a lunacy board. I'm afraid you would be called cracked by the temperate man and brother."

"'A sweet bell jangled out of tune'" in the Ophelia sense. I'm afraid I can't lay claim to that eminence in eccentricity; mine is the sort of crack that sometimes serves to increase the value of a bell in a set of chimes."

"Ah, when it comes to belles," laughed Philip, "you are beyond my scope. I'll say no more."

"Well, young men," said Mrs. Arden, entering at this moment, "you must come in and see the Carnots, they are asking for you." Then seating herself near her son, she added: "We're all charmed with your protégé, Elliot, though it's rather absurd to call a serious young man, at least a year older than you, protégé."

"It would be more than absurd, if it were the fact," broke in Bella pertly.

"It's very plain to me," said Elliot, shaking his head solemnly at his cousin, "that I shall have to begin to maintain discipline in this house. Aunt Caroline, I wonder that you permit such disregard of the respect due the head of the family. It's settled, then, that we invite Gray to Crécy," he added, in a serious tone.

"Yes, if it depends on my assent," said Mrs. Briscoe. "His manners are admirable, and I judge that he is well informed. Of course, you know his skill in drawing. I shall be delighted to have him, if Bella wants it," she added, looking toward her daughter, as if not quite certain that she was not going too far even in this non-committal assent.

"If he draws as well as he talks," Bella continued, "I shall be delighted. He's a trifle too much like a German crossed in love, and uncertain as to suicide or skepticism as a relief. That, however, may be an advantage for us. He'll devote himself more heartily to the gradgrind of life to obliterate the sentimental miseries. I've noticed that when people are falling out of love, they take more energetically to the routine of life, as after severe sickness one longs to do the work he sees going on about him," she added, with an air of unconscious sagacity.

"Bravo, Bella! how long has the lamp of your experience been lighted, that its flames have illuminated such deep recesses and thrown such radiance over the occult mysteries of life?" asked Philip, with an affectation of surprise.

"These are of the sort of convictions one derives from the habit of believing; like the faith which we can not prove," said Bella, running her fingers over the keys of the piano. "I wish your friend's name wasn't Gray," said Edith, sud-suddenly, "I always associate it with melancholy people. The teacher of mathematics at Harmington was a Miss Gray. The girls invariably called her Gay—because she was so solemn, I suppose."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CARNOTS.

JULES CARNOT, at twenty-seven, was master of all the arts and accomplishments of the man of the world, that is, understood by the admirable phrase in which the French condense so much, *savoir faire*. To be agreeable, though the lever by which he moved the world, was the least remarkable of the arts by which he endeared himself to the most sharply opposed persons and coteries. His vogue in

all ranks of Parisian society, native as well as stranger, was one of those vaguely recognized mysteries, which are the more impenetrable that it never occurs to any one to ask an explanation. Well-bred dunces and pushing *parvenus* are often tolerated even in the exclusive circle of the exclusive coterie, but Jules was neither. Though not a wit, he was ready, well informed and intellectually inclined; though no one imagined him poor, it was never assumed that he was rich. To his intimates it was no surprise to see the elegant young man the confidant and familiar of a duke in one sphere, the discreetly jovial *camarade* of a Bohemian in another. Women called him "adorable;" men called him "a charming fellow." His English intimates called him "a brick"—an adventurous form of admiration, which did not disturb his conventional equipoise, perhaps, because he had been so long in France, that he was more Frenchman than American, and did not quite comprehend the familiar significance of the slangy testimonial. By birth only an American, Jules was Parisian in adaptability and careless toleration of such speech and forms as he did not comprehend. For the *savoir faire* of the race is as often a negative quality as a knowledge of men and character—as silence in nine cases out of ten is accepted as tolerant wisdom—too indolent or too catholic to expose ignorance in others. Paris is the city of all the world where even the stranger is impregnated insensibly with a moral and social atmosphere of cynical acceptance of appearances, quite irrespective of positive conviction. It is the creed of the well-bred to ignore all that concerns a man, not visible in his exterior—after certain preliminary conventions have been stipulated.

Jules Carnot had passed these crucial conventions. He was received in the accepted *salons* of the capital and tolerated in the ruling caste. No one knew exactly the grounds of his acceptance, or his right among the rulers, but his presence and prowess among them were recognized without question. Pushing Americans, who made him one of the

lions of their social shows, vaguely regarded him as a personage among the *élite*; the French, who received him with almost equal favor, believed him to be a personage in America.

The Carnots of Jules' generation were, in fact, Americans. The children had passed most of their lives in France, where they had been sent to school in deference to a rich aunt, who was to be placated into leaving the boy her fortune. Bertrand Carnot, the father, was the grandson of an *émigré*, who, having royalist leanings, quit France in 1793, in the red days of the great revolution. This grandfather, Jean Carnot, had been a notary in Meaux, and like so many of his countrymen, supported himself in England for a time by teaching the children of Albion the French tongue. He selected a seaport town, where on a clear day his eyes could see the white cliffs of the land he loved. During the conquering years of the Republic, but more especially when Napoleon roused the British lion to impotent fury, rural England made no distinction as to the sympathies of the exiled Gaul, and grandfather Carnot was forced to seek his bread among a more tolerant people. He shipped before the mast on an American merchantman at Plymouth in 1801, resolved to seek his fortune among his compatriots in New Orleans or Montreal.

But he came to his own in vain, in both these cities of his native blood and speech. In 1812 he found himself a penniless wanderer in the streets of New York, where fortune smiled on him. He fell in with the head of a great commercial firm that carried on vast traffic with Bordeaux. He served his patron faithfully as valet and private factotum until 1819, when his benefactor dying, left him a legacy which was the foundation of a great fortune to the thrifty Jean. When the will was opened, it was found that the kind master had left the exile $5,000 and a modest house, with an ample garden, in that quarter of the city known as Varick Street, at that time a rural suburb of the metropolis.

With this little fortune, which, to the sober notions of Jean, seemed affluence, he sent to his native village for his mother and sweetheart. The mother was dead when the great news reached Meaux, but the sweetheart, who had waited all these years for the fulfillment of the vows they had plighted as boy and girl under the maples of Bishop Bossuet's garden, a quarter of a century before, was still waiting. Jean was a middle-aged man of forty and she an elderly spinster of thirty-seven when this befell the lovers. But after their marriage the two set to work with the accumulative thrift of the race, and when Jean died in 1840 his son inherited a handsome fortune and a gold mine in real estate, which the shrewd father, with the passion of the Gaul for land, had bought rood by rood in the thriving quarter above Fourteenth Street and the vicinity of Madison Square. The son, Bertrand, before the war, was ranked among the princes of trade in New York. He had houses in New Orleans, Bordeaux and New York, and his fleets covered every track of commerce. His family was in the serenest rank of the social leaders of the metropolis. He had married into one of the most potent "connections" in the politics of the country, selecting his spouse for this sort of prestige rather than wealth, of which he had enough. Unlucky entanglements in cotton just before the Civil War swept most of his fortune away.

The blow was too much for the mother, who received the news in France, where her son Jules and her two daughters, Clarice and Theodosia, were at school. When the children returned to New York a not less terrible affliction met them. Bertrand Carnot, from the clear-brained, sagacious merchant, had been stricken into something like imbecility. The two daughters, reared in affluence, came back to the home they knew but little of, with only a dim notion of the change in their life. Little more than the homestead remained to the family, and here for a year the household kept up a shadow of its former state. Carnot's impaired

faculties were unequal to the task of repairing the wreck which, under other conditions, would not have been hopeless. Hundreds unfortunate as he in the crash that followed secession, not only recovered but augmented their fortunes. But with the temperament of his race, succumbing to disaster, Bertrand Carnot let the golden strands slip through his fingers, and in 1862 even the homestead was swallowed in the flood.

The girls recoiled from the future that stared them in the face. They could not endure an existence in New York, where the bare wants of life remained to them. They persuaded the father, that with the $2,000 a year left, the family could live in something like ease in France, and, in any event, with their family connections, the opportunities for Jules would be greater. The father was not difficult to persuade, and in 1863 the family expatriated itself to the land of its ancestors. Society, however, put another construction on the return of the Carnots to the land of their forefathers. Clarice Carnot at twenty-two was a rarely beautiful girl—in every sense what her compatriots would have called *distinguée*. She was the conceded beauty of her coterie in New York and Paris. Stately as a princess—she was universally known as the "Duchess" among the Brahmin caste of the former city. But it was the austere beauty painters love to put on canvas, when they represent the more frigid deities of the intellects rather than the amours. She was cold, unimpressionable, and, it was said, unbearably haughty, even to insolence.

During the year of her return to New York, she had suitors for every social scene. Which she preferred, no one knew, nor did she ever give a sign. She had met a young man in Paris, who had followed her to New York, with whom the gossips linked her name obtrusively. Philip Kent had been graduated at Harvard, taken a degree at Oxford, and spent three years in Paris. He was the heir of one of the most pretentious of the commercial magnates of New

York, and was commonly known as "Prince Crœsus" in the clubs. His sister had married the eldest son of an English duke. The family looked for nothing less than a princess, as a fit mate for such a paragon as they had reared and adorned to regulate the social and political world.

A few months before the departure of the Carnot family for France, Clarice had asked her father into the library, and exacting a pledge of secrecy until such time as she should lift it, informed him that she was engaged to Philip Kent, but that the marriage could not, for reasons which the young man held obligatory, take place at present, nor the engagement even be made known. The father's brain, shaken by age and disaster, was quite unsettled by this apparent revival of the family fortunes. He fell into a curious state of whispering. He would take the servants, or any one who happened to be alone with him in the room, into a corner and whisper solemn nothings with his finger on his lips, wagging his head solemnly, and leaving the astonished person helpless with wonder. Philip had visited the house but rarely. One day, Carnot meeting the young man in Washington Square, favored him with one of his mysterious confidences, but went further, revealing his knowledge of the secret, saluted him rapturously as a prospective kinsman, and congratulated him on securing not only the flower of the Carnot flock, but the most beautiful girl in the world. Whether the old man's effusiveness or his semi-insanity repelled him, Philip listened in frigid silence to the infatuated father, and, with a freezing bow, bade him good-day.

The same afternoon, Theo entering her sister's room, found Clarice stretched on the floor unconscious, with a note crumpled in her hand. Even before summoning aid, the girl took care to read the contents. It was from Philip, briefly rehearsing the compact they had made and the penalty forced upon him by its infraction. He then related the luckless interview of the morning, and closed by declaring that to save her pain, rather than any other motive, he with-

drew his offer, imploring her to forget his wretched existence, or that she had ever met one who was in every way unworthy of her.

On recovering her senses Clarice concealed this letter, alleging some passing pretext to account for the swoon. Her sister discreetly said nothing. The next day, when alone with him, Clarice coldly announced to her father that the engagement with Philip Kent was broken. The old gentleman smiled in silly skepticism, intimating with senile archness that lovers' quarrels were to matrimony what spring frosts are to plants, providential measures to prevent too rapid maturity. But as the days wore on and Clarice kept wholly in her room, never appearing at table or going out, as she had formerly done—even his wandering wits gathered themselves sufficiently together to realize that it was no lovers' quarrel, and he began dimly to suspect and torment himself with the truth. Clarice's pride enabled her to stifle whatever of anguish this bitter and humiliating trial cost her. Hers was not the sort of heart one is apt to associate with the pathetic exuberances of the love-lorn. Whatever her feelings were she made no sign. So far as she knew, her father alone of the family was aware of the discarding. Presently she was seen at the opera and in social gatherings, with her habitual air of haughty reserve. If any change was remarked, it was that she had a trifle more of coldness and imperiousness than before.

The studious attention of Lord Chester Varian, son of the Earl of Cranstoun, set the gossips agog, prophesying the beauty's fate. It was said on all sides that it would be a match and that the ambitious beauty had jilted Kent for the Cranstoun coronet. Kent's manner confirmed the rumor. He was by no means the commonly accepted type of the broken-hearted swain, but his manner when he met the lady was full of a chivalrous devotion, that the knowing set down as hopeless passion. The sudden departure of the young lord, after a visit to the Carnot mansion, brought gossip

and speculation to a dumbfounded silence. In the portentous drama of war then occupying public attention, the final ruin of the Carnots made but a passing ripple on the social current. Too many were borne down in the universal swirl to give any one victim pre-eminence. They passed into the vortex, and the danger threatening others gave them the melancholy comfort of oblivion.

From out the ranks which, through wealth, circumstances and convention, wield such despotic influence over integral destiny, the Carnots drifted, like the hulk of a great vessel stricken into helplessness before the combat is well begun, into the deep waters of forgetfulness. They drifted passively, aimlessly. Head of the house there was none. The father had become a child. The children were left alone to direct the family destiny. The relatives on the mother's side were Southern in their antecedents and sympathies and had with the first outbreak gone South. Clarice made not the least murmur. She gave no sign of discontent. She waited patiently for her father to resume his natural leadership and she waited in vain. The fine old family homestead in Gramercy Square became hateful, long before it passed from their possession. It was soon evident to the children that their father had lost all power of recovering his ancient faculty of initiative and audacity. The death of his wife had completed the moral prostration, that always seems to strike hardest when it strikes natures conspicuously resolute and self-dependent.

In the dispersion of the family treasures, Clarice went through the ordeal tearless, unmurmuring. To the petulant and boyish complaints of Jules, she had but one answer: "We are poor, we must part with the last penny rather than leave a stain on our name." To her sister she said simply: "We must go where our poverty shall be no reproach to us; we must not linger on the outskirts of a world, simply tolerated, where we have been first." After a time the dreadful business was ended; the name of Carnot emerged

without a stain. No man was a penny the poorer through the family's fault and Clarice was satisfied. In the autumn of 1863 the family were established in a charming apartment in the most genteel of the creamy palaces of the princes' quarter in Paris on the Rue Galilée.

With the personal treasures saved from the New York home, supplemented by antiques, *bric-à-brac*, tapestries and the exquisite trifles that may be gathered for a song in Paris, by those who know how to buy, the new home was a reflex rather of well-to-do ease than exiled poverty. Until the last detail of the change had been completed and the nine rooms had taken on the air of nameless completion that is implied in familiarity, Clare bore up with a hard, tearless composure piteous to see. She frightened the father, now restored to mental balance, but in revenge, physically and morally supine. Jules and Theo resumed their places in study, the one in the College of France, the other in the Convent des Anges, at Neuilly.

The end of effort, the blank of utter rest, brought the inevitable reaction. As she found herself alone day after day in the house, sacred from no associations, unsympathetic as new surroundings always are, she gave way to a deeper and deeper melancholy, which the poor old father was powerless to combat, even if he had dared broach the girl's grief. She struggled bravely, determinedly against collapse, but the severe strain of months broke down all resistance. One day Theo was called to the convent vestibule, where Céleste, the housemaid, stood weeping and wringing her hands. Monsieur had commanded her to bring mademoiselle home at once, her sister Clare was thought to be dying. For weeks Clare's fate hung in terrifying uncertainty. Her feverish paroxysms revealed nothing. Had Theo not taken advantage of the incident in the old home in Gramercy Park, she would never have known that her reserved and haughty sister was mortal, and suffered from the same ills that wrench the heart of the gentlest and most impulsive.

The misty yellow haze of a golden September afternoon burnished the foliage in the park opposite the house, the first time Clare was able to sit in the *salon*, where Theo played softly the airs her sister loved. A wondrous change had been wrought during the captivity of disease. The thick black hair had turned into masses of silvery, fluffy whiteness. As she sat at the window, where the sumptuous equipages of the afternoon world rolled over the smooth roadway of the Champs Élysées with their burden of the gay, the rich, and the luxurious, the girl looked like a draped figure in marble, the head crowned with transparent tresses of driven snow. The old haughty spirit had been burned out in the crucible of suffering. She gradually resumed her place in the family, and as the days wore on every one was conscious of a subtle transformation. The mind had suffered the same change as the body. Every thing about her was softened not exactly to gentleness, but to passivity.

Theo and Jules went back to their studies, and the house in the Rue Galilée returned to its monotonous *régime*. Clare resumed the routine tranquilly, going nowhere, and seeing no one. She had many acquaintances in Paris, familiars of her old days of regnant dominion, but she made no sign to them. Few of them knew that the former belle of New York was living in Paris, and even those who had known her most intimately did not venture to obtrude unbidden. The only interest that attached her to the outside world was her church associations. Catholic, like its ancestors, the ceremonial piety of the Roman Church had always been maintained in the Carnot family. Received as parishioners at St. Philippe de Raoul, Clare was not long in winning the deep interest of the, at that time, celebrated priest, Père Barodet, who had for some time been stirring Paris flocks by the Savonarola-like vigor of his ministry. The priest became warmly interested in his new devotee, dining regularly with the family on Saturday, when Theo and Jules were home for the day.

Papa Carnot, as he soon became known, fell into his new lines with placid contentment. So soon as he had taken his morning coffee, arrayed with the care to detail habitual to a Frenchman, no matter what his age, he sallied forth into the Champs Élysées, adorned his button-hole with the blossoms of the season, and from ten o'clock until one devoured the newspapers on file in the American bank, on the Rue Scribe. The French nature in him, unchanged by sixty years displacement and alien grafts, came to the surface so soon as he was set down among the influences congenial to its reassertion. It is the French instinct to be gay, if not sustainedly cheerful —under conditions which profoundly depress the more equable Saxon. He took very readily to the narrow economies and repulsive shifts that distinguish the middle class French.

He saw nothing degrading in the souring self-denials and niggard calculations that waste the energies which Saxons turn to account in large achievements. To the Parisian there is nothing so valueless as time, though he be born and bred in the land ruled by the maxim that makes time and money convertible terms. Papa Carnot forgot the secret of wealth and conquest, and abandoned himself to the *dolce far niente* of inaction. To get sight of his favorite journal, he would sit patiently for hours in the solemn circle of the bank reading-room gazing absorbedly at the books of diagrams adorning the long tables in which the theaters of Paris, the summer hotels, and the great steamship lines embalm their seductions.

At the end of a year Papa Carnot could have retailed the wonders of every great industry set forth in these gorgeous catalogues, which form the library of hotel and bank reading-rooms on the Continent. At one o'clock, as regularly as the bell, he was in the pretty *salle à manger* in the Rue Galilée, presiding at the modest *déjeûner à la fourchette* with Clare, prattling on the news he had gathered in the journals and the gossip of the bank. Saturday, when Theo

and Jules were home for the day, he interrupted this routine, and joined the young folks in little picnics to St. Cloud, Versailles, St. Germain, Meudon and the countless pleasure haunts of the city. Clare never made one in these promenades, from which the others returned merry and hearty to join Père Barodet and herself at the dinner which on this evening was *en fête*, with Burgundy and Champagne.

Papa Carnot's greatest delight, however, after his midday meal and nap, was to saunter down the Champs Élysées, watching the gay masses that promenade under the chestnuts below the Rond-point and fill the springy chairs set in serried ranks between the *trottoir* and the roadway. His open-air day was ended with an hour, from five until six, among the boisterous groups of nursemaids and children that form the audiences of the French Punch and Judy—*Les Théâtres Guignol.* Taking his place frugally outside the rope that marked the paying audience from the gratuitous, he entered into the pantomimic humors of the little scene, saluting the lusty whacks of the manikin Punch on the head of the pigmy Judy, or the woes of the bedeviled *gendarmes*, with as keen, if not as noisy, a rapture as that of the ecstatic children or their gossiping *bonnes.*

Many an American, rolling luxuriously by in his chariot, turned in a puzzled way to catch a second glimpse of the tall, gray-haired man towering above the medley of nursemaids, soldiers, tourists, and what not, absorbed in the mimic woes of Punch, with an expression of vague recognition of the calm old face under other circumstances and in other places. Whether the old gentleman ever recognized these startled visions as personages he had met in affairs, or entertained in other days, he made no sign, but when he sat at the dinner table he could give Clare the roster of all the New Yorkers known to them in Paris. At nine o'clock the father and daughter, finishing a game of chess or casino, joined in the devotions of the day, according to the Roman rubric, and by ten o'clock the house was silent.

This monotonous routine went on for two years. The family fitted itself into the new and circumscribed grooves without murmur. The high hopes secretly cherished that Clare's beauty would re-establish their fortunes by a great marriage were long ago abandoned, and Jules was now regarded as the hope of the house. Clare encouraged no wooers. Indeed, she did not find herself among people, exclusive as her circle was, where desirable matches were likely. There were vague hopes that the close of the civil war would restore the family some of the *débris* of the fortune lost in the outbreak of the rebellion—as it was in the Southern house of Carnot that the golden chain had snapped in 1860.

But in 1866 all hope of regaining even a penny of the lost millions vanished in the report of a judicial commission which declared the derelict agents irresponsible and bankrupt. But worse than this was to come. The two-thousand-dollar income derived from the mother's estate was cut down one-half, owing to confiscation and the iron-clad oath exacted by Congress, and consequent shrinkage in the value of investments. Clare's passive indifference which had hitherto sustained her, broke down under this new calamity. She succumbed helplessly to the blow, wringing her thin hands and secluding herself in her room. But the scepter passed from her nerveless hand, to one far more capable of wielding it. The faculty of management, which distinguishes the French woman beyond any of her civilized sisters, was inherited in the highest degree by Theo. She happened to be in the house when the meaning of the news was told by the trembling parent. "What, in heaven's name, is to become of us; we can never exist on $1,000 a year," groaned the old man helplessly.

Clare looked out of the window in a listless, uninterested way, as though the question didn't reach her, buried as she was in some distant thought.

"For," resumed the father, in the tone of a man who in-

vites and relishes refutation, "we can never pay 2,000 francs for this apartment, 300 francs for the cook, 150 francs for the maid, Theo's schooling and Jules' college, expense sout of 5,000 francs. It will take every penny of our income to live, even by dismissing one servant and reducing the rent in a cheaper apartment."

He looked dejectedly at Theo, as if she were in some way to suggest means and ways, and she did not disappoint him.

"Jules shall not quit college," she said, decisively; "he has but a year more. He shall remain that year, if I have to sell bouquets in the Palais Royal or at the door of the Opera. His career depends upon his graduation, and our future depends upon his career. He must finish it, if the rest of us live in a mansard."

Clare turned and looked at her sister in languid wonder; the father's glance fell upon the letters lying on the table in consternation. Theo had always discovered positive conviction and unshakable determination. He felt that a tyrant was about to take the government of the household and disturb the serene ways that he had come to love. He made a feeble attempt to resist the new power.

"But, my child, how are we to manage? One thousand a year for four people; you can see yourself that it is impossible in the way we live now. Jules should go to work. He has been at school all his life and should be fit for something now. I was a junior partner at his age, and it is my opinion, anyway, that too much schooling unfits young men for active life. No, we can not keep Jules at college on one thousand dollars and live ourselves."

This was said deprecatingly, as though the poor man were responsible for the inelastic quality of the dollars.

Theo had risen and was walking the floor with her hands clasped behind her. She stopped before her father, where she could watch Clare's face, and said confidently:

"I have a plan that will resolve all our difficulties. The present rent can be cut down one-half; the apartment simi-

lar to this on the fourth floor is vacant ; it is in every way as desirable as this and costs but 800 francs. There is 1,200 saved at a blow. To my mind the fourth floor is more agreeable than this, for there is a balcony in front and a terrace in the rear. I will quit the convent to-day and that outlay is saved. I will do the work of the *bonne* and that leak stops. But I have a better resource than these miserable pinchings ; I will put myself into relations with the commission agents in the Rue Scribe, and I can earn oceans of money from New Yorkers who can not shop themselves, not understanding the language.

"What better are we than others who live in this way ?" she added, as Clare started in dismay. "There are the Flints, the Davisons and the Grants, who live in splendor by the very same means. I am proud as you are," she cried, her voice thick and passionate, "but I am not proud enough to starve as long as there is money in the pockets of any one I know ! Furthermore, what is there equivocal or demeaning in driving to the great *magasins,* to do the talking and pay the money for people who can't talk with the tradesmen ? There's nothing disgraceful in that, I'm sure. One is merely the voice of a rich purse and not its slave, as a banker is. I have often done it for pleasure ; why not for a livelihood ? I will at once make known to all our friends that I am at their service, and you shall soon see me with an income that will put us at ease. We shall live as we have lived ; Jules shall finish his course like a gentleman and begin his career unshackled by the necessity of dividing his mind. He will be a great advocate some day. I heard the curé of the Madeleine tell Father Barodet that young Carnot was regarded as a born orator at the École de Droit."

"If we reduce expenses, as you suggest," interrupted Clare, with only a degree of change from her usual listlessness, "we shall lose all our church influence. The Countess de Bellechasse and the Baroness Verneuil, who have opened

the faubourgs to Jules, believe him rich, or likely to be. None of these people will countenance us if we exhibit our straits. There is absolution in the church for every sin but poverty. Who among your and Jules' aristocratic friends will countenance us *au quatrième?* All Jules' advantages thus far have come from his intimacy with the sons of these people. His reception in the Faubourg is due solely to the idea that we have American prospects, and that Jules is to share the *rentes* of our old aunt, the Baroness Pleinevide."

Theo laughed outright as Clare concluded. "A fig for the Bellechasse, the Verneuil, and the rest. The Prince d'Amboise is devoted to Jules. I can get along without all this poverty-stricken *noblesse* better than it can get along without me." "Don't talk to me," resumed Theo after a pause, "there's nothing but sham and pretense, from one end to the other, of these great families. The young men live in the clubs and cafés, gambling and squandering; they waste enough on opera-dancers and follies of all sorts to keep the home-table well laden. But they never go home. What do they care, if their wretched fathers and mothers pinch and slave, so long as they have means to drive or ride in the Bois, appear at the opera, or shine at court. Jules pointed out the other day a group driving tandem in the Bois, every one of them engaged in some sort of business under fictitious names. The young Count de Blauvault is a partner with the rich butcher Duval; De Rogny, the swell, is partner in a theater; the Marquis Clarette has a wine-shop in the Rue Dauphin, kept by his protégée, a *grisette* from the Latin quarter. I suppose very rich people, like the De Broglies, the Foulds, the Decazes, who send their domestics to fill the family pews at St. Philippe's, have plenty on their tables and live like Christians; but it is my experience that in the ordinary French household there is starvation in private and sham abundance in public. Fancy Jules' frame of mind, coming in with a college-friend and finding our table, like

scores I have seen, without a cloth, and showing stint of any kind in the food."

"You have made good use of your opportunities, Theo," said Clare, laughing. "You ought to write sketches of 'French Interiors' for the English magazines; they would prove irresistible."

"Who knows but I may; as I am to be responsible for the family income henceforth, I'll keep that as a possible pot-boiler."

CHAPTER IX.

THEO REVIVES THE FAMILY FORTUNES.

THROWN into a good-humor by Theo's lively sallies on their neighbors' poverty, the Carnots dismissed gloomy forebodings, and the reconstruction of the domestic *régime* was left entirely to the energetic revolutionist. Theo was better than her promise. She quit the convent the same day the evil news came, to the explosive astonishment of her girl friends, all of whom admired, while many stood in wholesome awe of her. No one suspected the cause, for it is an article of implicit belief among the French that American and wealth mean the same thing—as, a few years since, Briton stood for lordliness and treasure. A long experience of the sharp practices of the boastful islanders has dissipated the belief, which, up to 1870, had not been shaken in regard to the Americans.

The Carnots were commonly believed to be wealthy, and they took no pains to discredit the impression—indeed, the ingenious Theo, for Jules' sake, furthered the delusion in countless trifles, known to be most impressive with the credulous Gaul. With equal promptness the 2,000 francs rent was diminished to 800. Here Theo gave a foretaste of her business tact. The landlord refused to consent to the

exchange of lease without a large bonus—a half-year's rent, to assure him against loss. Theo at once made inquiries at the bank for a family in need of an apartment. There were plenty such, and introducing herself to several, she at last secured a tenant who not only took the lease, but paid a bonus of 500 francs for immediate possession, and secured the services of the quick-witted negotiator to furnish it for them.

When the work was done, Theo laid down a check for 3,000 francs as the result of her fortnight's enterprise. The family looked on their new chief with rapturous amazement. The fourth floor was arranged precisely like the first and was even more commodious, for the balcony could be used as an evening resort, from which to watch the splendid spectacle of Paris *en gala* on the Champs Élysées. It must be borne in mind, further, that height does not bear the same inference in French mansions that it would in countries where detached houses are the rule. As Theo remarked jocosely, "It was in every way a rise in the world; there was purer air, more chance for outdoor life on the wide balconies, additional exercise on the extra stairs, and money in purse."

Not a word had been said to Jules. Great, therefore, was the astonishment of that young dandy when, ringing at the familiar door, a strange servant opened it. He was living *en garçon* in the Latin quarter, and had been off on the Marne visiting one of his comrades during the family transplanting. Theo undertook the explanation, as the young man came in bewildered and dropped upon a sofa, his face an interrogation point.

"*Mon cher*, we are a thousand dollars a year poorer than when you were here last. In order to keep you in college until you finish we have reduced expenses, and we want you to economize as much as you can in your pocket-money. We must pinch in every thing,—"

Jules winced.

"Oh, we shall not be forced to economize in the French sense. Whatever we have to give up, we shall at least have plenty on the table. No floods of Burgundy or champagne when you bring your friends, but enough, and, with good management, some luxuries."

Then she explained all that had been done, winding up with an expression of cheerful confidence in her ability to meet the crisis, that dispelled the gloom from the handsome face before her. Jules sank back in the cushions, dropped his head on the back of the sofa and looked at his sister wonderingly; she continued as if answering his thought.

"There will be no perceptible difference in your circumstances. If you can manage to come and live at home, it will increase your pocket-money to that extent. If you keep your rooms in the quarter, of course there is the rent, washing, fuel and countless little expenses you are put to when a friend drops in. Do just as you like about it. We shall be satisfied whatever you do. If you come home, it will cost you six sous a day on the omnibus, unless you walk one way, which I think would be a good plan. It would keep you in good digestion and freshen you for study. Make up your mind to it and we shall be very happy all at home again."

"When one can't have what one loves, one must love what one has; your reasoning, Theo, would do credit to our Roman digest. I will give up the rooms to-morrow and send my traps home. How do father and Clare take the new dispensation?" he asked, as Theo gave him a rapturous hug for his Spartan self-denial.

"Clare doesn't seem to mind it at all; nothing moves her, as you know. Papa really sees no difference. He eats, sleeps, goes to the bank, buys his bouquet, patronizes the pit at Guignol, maunders over chess with Clare, or casino with me, and is perfectly happy. I doubt if he really comprehends the matter at all." Then she added, looking at her brother as she held his two hands in her own, "Jules,

mon cher, do you realize that the rehabilitation of the House of Carnot is for us to bring about, your brain and my—" she hesitated and colored.

"Your what—?" asked Jules, curiously.

"Never mind what," she said in a low voice, looking away from him. "I feel equal to the mission—do you?"

Jules was but a lad, older by two years than the self-contained, inveterately confident little manager who sat beside him. The future had never obtruded itself upon him very distinctly. He had his dreams, vague, shadowy dreams, in which abundance, luxury and even fame of some sort figured, but he had never stopped to examine the processes by which all these were to be brought to him. Theo's question gave him a sudden shock, as when one comes to the end of an easy journey by rail and finds a rough road and no vehicle to take him to an unknown destination. His mind was instantly full of retrospect and apprehension. He had lived the ways of a sybarite. He was so accustomed to the pleasant amenities of life, that the mere suggestion of a divergent path gave him a shock—such as a man feels who, walking through flowery lanes and blossoms, sees smiling vineyards and abundant fruits in the uplands above him and comes suddenly, fatigued and inert, to a broad and bridgeless stream. The weary work of retracing his steps and the uncertainty of finding a thoroughfare dishearten him. He sinks to the ground, and the longer he gives way to discouragement and inaction, the more remote the chance of regaining the right path in time.

Though not rich, Jules had never felt any severe deprivation in college. His associates in the academy and university, though the sons of wealthy men, many of them of the ancient *noblesse*, regarded him as rich, because, being an American he could be nothing else. Young men in France, no matter what the parental status, are never allowed lavish pocket-money. It thus happened that Jules was always the Crœsus of his class in ready cash. The prudent management of the

family resources since the return to France, had enabled him to spend as much as in his boyish days, when there was no limit to his allowance. He was always equal to his associates in the hilarious but modest dissipations that the students indulged in in the Latin quarter. He knew perfectly well that the intimacy accorded him by his aristocratic associates was due to their belief in his heirship to American millions. His heart sank as he thought of the change that would come upon his agreeable relations, when it was known that he was poor and almost a pretender—that he was not only of the despised *bourgeoisie*, but of the very poor *bourgeoisie*.

Theo watched all this with an aching heart. Her sympathy with her brother was profound and tender—the ruling passion, indeed, of her heart and brain. She loved him as she loved no other member of the family—as she could hardly ever love any body in the world—she often said to herself. She was very like him, not only in face, but in the finer fibers of her nature. Their two brains seemed to work as one when the brother and sister were moved deeply. She comprehended the drift of his thought as clearly as if he had spoken, but it never occurred to her to view it as ignoble or unmanly in the pampered darling to think only of himself, his pleasures, his vanities, his fine friends and the figure he was to cut in their eyes. To her these considerations did not seem paltry or trivial.

On the contrary, she quite shared the feeling of angry rebellion that made the lad hate himself and his surroundings. She resented what she considered unmerited poverty, with a bitter, scornful sense of personal and family injury, that made the selfish anguish of the young man natural and consistent. She never dreamed that her own and the family's abnegation fed the brother's selfishness. She thought it only right that the rest of them should pinch and economize, that Jules might live congenially while fitting himself for the destiny awaiting him. He was to restore the ruined fortunes

of the House of Carnot, and while he girded himself for the battle, what more fitting than that the rest should toil and slave and stint and cheer him on? It never occurred to her that it was not in preparation for the battle she was sacrificing the rest. Jules was willing to accept the work allotted him, but in his own way and on his own terms. It was in the spirit of the feudatory led to battle by his liege, sword and buckler thrust into his nerveless hands, instead of winning them like a real knight, and in the conquest proving his right to wear them.

Jules was not of the knightly sort. His life had been an easy, if not pampered one. He knew no such thing as self-denial. Not that he was ungenerous or devoid of a certain egotistic chivalrousness. In danger he was no coward; in an emergency he was self-reliant. His severest crosses in life hitherto had been the deprivation of a horse, a box at the opera, and the unstinted bank account of some of his American companions. Not that he had thought deeply or repined habitually over these. His nature was too mercurial for that. In New York the perpetual obtrusion of these wants would perhaps have soured his spirit and embittered him.

Coming to Paris before these things had begun to make the impression of daily denials, he had rather wondered at the absence of them than brooded over their unattainability. In the Latin quarter he readily fell into the life, half Bohemian, half scholastic, that distinguishes its academic movement from nearly every university society in the world. He mingled as readily in the joyous bouts of the *bourgeoisie* students as in the rarer atmosphere of the young *noblesse* of the faubourgs. He had picked up all the liberal *flamboyancies* of the social freebooters, and was as cynically indifferent to doctrine as the New York railroad magnate who confessed himself a democrat with democrats, and a republican with republicans—but all the time for himself! He had the arguments of Blanc, Rousseau, and Prudhon at the end

of his tongue. He was in the best standing in that sacred *cénacle* which made the table of Voltaire the altar of its devotions.

He was an *habitué* of the Café Procope, the temple of contemporary radicalism, political and social. He was loudest in applauding the young oracle of republicanism, Léon Gambetta, in his vehement monologues—when the clinking glasses of the Procope guests punctuated the resounding periods. He sat in the hemicycle of the law school under the ministrations of a republican professor, a prince of the Roman empire on one hand, an Italian revolutionist on the other, and whether it was craft, address or indifference, he was as intimately trusted by the prince as the *prolétaire*, the confidant of both.

He had the rare faculty we see in some men and most women—evoking confidence and giving none, with an expansive effusion that lured the most wary. He knew something of every one that gave him, in a certain sort, the mastery over his confidants, betrayed by his apparent frankness into saying what, on second thought, was an abiding and bitter regret. For, if the borrower be the servant of the lender, the confidant of a man's conscience is in a sort his master and may become his tyrant.

Nor was it wholly when the wine was in, that Jules' comrades unsuspectingly forged the chain whose keys the young man held. Not that there were any sinister mysteries in the lives of the varied groups into whose intimacy Jules was thrown—beyond the fragile amours of the day or college pranks of a boisterous sort. It would, however, have been excessively awkward for the young patrician, whose family hoped for political preference at the hands of the democracy, to have Jules casually hint at the sentiments of loathing and contempt cherished for the *prolétaire* by the noble caste. Nor would the exuberant evangels of the rights of man and universal leveling, have enjoyed confronting their aristocratic fellows daily, conscious that their inmost convictions

were known to the common enemy, before the great day when they were to be put in execution.

Jules was thus, without any original tendency for the chicane of life, irresistibly swirled into those prudent compromises with his friends and his convictions, which end by warping the conscience into insincerity and unscrupulousness. As between a plain good action and a plain bad one, involving no one he cared for, he would unhesitatingly have chosen the good—not because it was good, but because it was gentlemanly and could bring no sting afterward. But he would have consented to the bad as readily, if the other threatened to mar the symmetrical contour of his daily enjoyment. His horror of poverty and craving for the consideration that comes from the power to realize every wish, were more the aspiration for an intellectual freedom than a vulgar craze for social distinction. This was his own explanation of the agnosticism that enabled him to be all things to all men—save to himself.

From the day that he found Theo at the head of the house, Jules kept the words she had spoken in his mind. He girded himself, day by day, for the work she had set him. His reticence about himself and the family became more studious, as his tongue became more free. His aristocratic friends were regaled less at the charming apartment in the Rue Galilée, nor was he weak enough to cultivate with more marked assiduity the Brahmin agencies that he counted upon to aid him, in that uncertain future that was now always before him, waking or sleeping.

Theo aided him with matchless *finesse*. She had kept her word to the letter in promising the others ease. The family, for the first time since it came to Paris, had a modest balance at the bankers, and the very first use Theo put that mark of opulence to was to hand in Jules' signature as entitled to check on the deposit. This increased his repute among the collegians, not one of whom had such a mark of parental confidence. Theo's skill and business sagacity established

her in a splendid income before the end of the first year. In 1867 a New Yorker on the boulevards might have imagined himself on Broadway. Every third man he met was an acquaintance or a person known by sight on "the street." Scores of Theo's school friends were in the city with their parents, to visit the great Exposition and replenish the family finery.

Theo's business became so burdensome that she had to call in help. But no one succeeded like herself. It was not only to do the talking that her clients desired her assistance, it was to make use of her admirable taste. They were content to be put off with substitutes in ordinary purchases, but in jewelry, silks, *bric-à-brac* and what not, they preferred to wait days rather than go without the master-mind. Theo was by no means put out by this evidence of her prowess. Nor was she slow in learning the mysteries of the traffic in foreign ignorance and credulity. She had prudently mastered every detail in one of the American agencies that abound in the Rue Scribe. She paid a round fee, and put herself into the hands of one of the shrewdest usurers in the confidence of her compatriots. It was a woman who had been ruined by the rebellion, the wife of a petty official in the American legation, who had begun her career by newspaper letters and then drifted into this peculiar trade. She practiced on the vanity and credulity of the stranger. Having some occult relation with an English journal much read by transatlantic persons, she was enabled to stimulate the morbid craving of Americans for publicity, and made use of this to ingratiate her services with the flattered victim.

Not a turn in the practice escaped Theo. Gifted with brains, accomplished in letters, she soon left her mentor far behind, and in contemptuous pity gave her such of her *clientèle* as were content with her offices. Well as she knew the impositions practiced upon Americans, she was dumbfounded at the ramifications enmeshing the victim. No sooner was the American in the hands of the agent, than the sys-

tematized extortions began; there was an understanding with the cabman, an understanding with the shopman, an understanding with the domestics, an understanding with the restaurant, understanding with the theater ticket-seller—absolutely an understanding with the railway agents and steamship men. From all these the agent drew a commission as well as from the purchasers. In order to pay commissions and make profit, all these sellers were of course forced to overcharge the luckless stranger, who, unacquainted with the language, was a victim inviting the constant fleecing befalling him or her. It was in most cases her, for men are too shrewd to buy through interpreters, and if they do, are better judges of values.

Theo counted the fifty dollars well spent that initiated her into all this iniquity. She did not herself descend to all the meannesses. She refused to share the sous with the cabman, the francs with the salesman, the *pour-boire* with the waiter, or any of the petty thefts. She made a regular agreement with a few great firms. They were to pay her so much per cent. on every hundred francs bought, and while she exacted payment to the last farthing, she was met with reverential obeisances in every great bazar in the capital. Her clients, it was soon notorious, bought more and with less haggling than any others brought in by outside agents. So gratified were the merchants and so liberal the margins on the sales they made, that not content with the percentage paid Theo they regularly made her presents of dress patterns, laces and the specialties for which she brought most custom.

When her clients were old friends, they did not venture to offer their chaperon money. In such cases handsome presents were given, which, by an understanding with the merchant, were set to Theo's credit, and the value returned in cash when she collected her percentage. Few of the friends who found Theo so exquisitely dressed, so radiant in youth and high spirits, realized the ruin that had been

wrought in the family fortunes seven years before. But even had they known the straits to which the Carnots were driven, delicacy would have kept them from offering money to a lady.

It was generally supposed in New York that the Carnots had gone to Paris to enjoy a rich legacy, and it was vaguely rumored that a noble kinswoman had adopted Jules as her heir. Theo, however, while dressed in perfect taste, indulged in no extravagance. There wasn't a gleam of gold to be seen about her person—but plain as her attire was, every woman that came near her suffered in comparison. Whether it was the slender, willowy figure, the charming pose of arms and head, the sensuous undulation of carriage, it was hard to say; but among a score of women she was the magnet; among a roomful of talkers her voice alone subdued. She had an art of her own in making simple draperies and very ordinary materials into gracious folds and furbelows, that cheapened the rich tissues of her friends, costing a hundredfold more.

She made the fortune of one poor little shopman by appearing in a sort of linsey, fitting tight to the body, which so fired every woman that saw it, that nothing would do but she must have one like it. Nor were the merchants slow to recognize this value in their patron. Hundreds of fabrics considered dead stock were sent her, and within a month the enchanted shopman had sold the last ell. It was a comedy that no one could have enjoyed more than the crafty little creature herself, to watch her operations with a rich party of her family acquaintances in one of the grand magazines. As it would not do to offer Theo money, she really must take a dress pattern exactly like the one her taste had chosen for Mrs. Mammon, or a bonnet, or a yard of lace, or a box of gloves, or a bracelet, or a diamond ring, or a fine width of tapestry, or an ormolu clock. The witch edified the home circle with no end of ludicrous accounts of these lively travesties, until the American family on the floor

below hearing the hilarity through the open windows would send to know "what was up!"

Theo's first year's earnings were something over ten thousand dollars, to say nothing of an ample wardrobe for herself, Clare, Jules and papa. Nor were Jules and Papa Carnot idle in the harvest of 1867. Husbands, sons and brothers, and even lovers, had to be remembered by fond wives, sisters and sweethearts. The gains from these aids swelled the receipts of 1867–8 to $10,000, and then Theo felt at ease. This was the great epoch in her venture. After the Exposition, business fell off, and her earnings did not reach $4,000. The house, too, shared in the good fortune. It was a perfect museum of rare china, *bric-à-brac*, *articles de Paris*, engravings and the million bits that go to make a Paris interior an artistic fairy scene.

Nor was the material gain all. Theo's cleverness, wit, good-humor and beauty became a sort of cult, not only among the colony (as the exiled Americans and English style themselves when settled in any number in a foreign city, for wealth has a sort of free-masonry of its own), but among the social magnates of native society, and she was soon the vogue in the most distinguished *salons* of the faubourg, where, when it was found that she was sister to the handsome Jules, she was more welcome than ever. She was the inseparable guest of some wealthy family, at the opera, at the theaters, summer watering-places, ministerial *fêtes*, on tours to Fontainebleau, Switzerland and Biarritz.

When the American Minister, who was at that time a man of fine accomplishments, gave receptions, Theo was invaluable in entertaining the foreigners, for she spoke the German and French tongues with great purity. At one of the great *fêtes* at the ministry of foreign affairs she was remarked by the Emperor himself, who deigned to make a little joke with her—to the effect that it was a lucky thing for the Empress that there was no Mademoiselle Carnot in Hoboken when

he lived there, or France would have had an American consort! You may be sure Eugénie didn't hear this pretty speech, or she would not have ordered madame, the Duchess de Persigny, to bring the little American and present her. The Empress was so charmed by her sprightliness, wit and modesty that she commanded her chamberlain, in Theo's hearing, to put mademoiselle's name down for the *fêtes* at St. Cloud!

It was by a stroke of dazzling adroitness that the witch won the Empress wholly. She had, by order of the chamberlain, accompanied a beautiful New Orleans girl to an imperial reception at the Tuileries. All Paris was agog over *l'Americaine's* beauty and wealth, "a cotton princess," as *Figaro* wickedly nicknamed her. She was an orphan and in Paris with a guardian to settle an estate. Her life was made miserable by adventurers writing her their readiness to make her a princess, a queen, if she would but grant an interview. She was very much amused with Theo, and had made her something like a confidant. She was partly French through her grandmother, as well as by her father, who, though born in New Orleans, was of a noble French family, the De la Flêches of Blois. Even in the stately throng of princes, dukes, marshals and noblemen of every rank and nation, the two Americans were not obscure.

Theo, though not so stately as her companion, was a perfect picture of demure feminine loveliness. She knew many of the young noblemen, and the friends were soon at their ease—though the reception was to the kings visiting Paris at the close of the Exhibition. As they sat watching the gorgeous figures in groups in the magnificent *salon* of the ambassadors, a young man in the full court costume, with dazzling stars on his breast and the broad ribbon of the legion of honor, came forward and bowed low before Theo. She flushed with pleasure, and turning from her companion as she rose, said:

"*Monsieur le prince*, I thought you were in Baden. I am

enchanted to see you here"—then, speaking to *l'Americaine*, she added: "May I take the liberty of presenting to you my brother's friend, the Prince d'Amboise—Mademoiselle de la Flêche? Have you been carrying your wicked conquests into the Palatinate, since we saw you; my brother tells me all the opera folks are in mourning when you leave town. Did you leave Baden-Baden draped in black, or was there a mingling of *rouge et noir*."

"*Ma foi*, Mademoiselle Theo, you American misses have a charming boldness of attack. What could a modest man say to such an indictment?"

"A modest man would find an answer very simple—the question is, what can a wicked one like the Prince d'Amboise, who glories in his wickedness, say?" laughed Theo, maliciously.

"Ah, as for that, if my colors are struck I must not defend, but I implore grace."

At that moment the Empress, accompanied by a brilliant bevy of dames, halted just before Theo and the prince. Beckoning the former with a little gesture, she said somewhat petulantly, as Theo stood courtseying before her:

"Mademoiselle has forgotten Père Barodet, in her anxiety to show Mademoiselle de la Flêche the gayeties of Paris." While speaking she had signified her pleasure that the last named lady should approach.

Theo looking the imperial lady modestly in the face, replied without an instant's hesitation: "Pardon, your Majesty. Madame la Princesse de Metternich will convince you that I have not forgotten your majesty's wishes. If I dared take the liberty, I would ask your majesty to bear Mademoiselle de la Flêche in kind memory, for, thanks to her generosity, Père Barodet now has the ten thousand francs needed to put up the memorial altar. The check will be in the good father's hands by the morning post."

As Theo uttered this indomitable fib, she stole a warning glance at the amazed beauty. The Empress smiled sweetly

on the latter and gave her the imperial hand, which the heiress kissed timidly, blushing and confused.

"Mademoiselle, you have made me your friend; the Père Barodet is the model of a good pastor. Piety like yours will not go without recognition." Saying this, the Empress, turning to Madame Metternich, said archly:

"Madame la Princesse, 'twould be a shame to have so good a Catholic and so beautiful a girl lost to France. Can we not devise some means of keeping mademoiselle where good and generous Catholics are so much needed?"

"Ah, *pour ça majesté*," responded the gay princess in her funny German mixture of French, "mademoiselle is very hard to please, apparently. She has been turning the heads of all our *beaux garçons*, who complain of her as cruel. She has left some cavalier in the sunny Louisiana, and has no eyes for our melancholy beaux."

The Empress fixed her eyes on the young girl, who blushed to a crimson loveliness, that sent a pang of envy into the rouged dowagers, who, unable to distinguish the words of the conversation, could not imagine why the young lady was throwing out these signals with no convoy any where in sight. "This will never do, mademoiselle," said the Empress, gayly tapping her shoulder with the lace of her fan. "Beauty like yours deserves a court for a setting; you must be a duchess at least." Turning to Theo, who had been permitted to remain near enough to hear this pretty comedy, the Empress continued: "Père Barodet has told me of your devotion to St. Philippe de Raoul. I shall never have any thing but an indulgent ear for any thing you may wish to say to me."

Theo bent with a deep reverence, as the Princess de Metternich, smiling significantly, followed the imperial lady to the dais where the majesties were to be received.

"My dear, I have made the Empress your friend for life. What an inspiration that check was. You must give me credit for some presence of mind to find such an invention

on the spur of the moment," and Theo looked at her silent companion in reproach.

"It was a piece of most unheard of"—Miss La Flêche seemed to have impudence on the end of her tongue, but thinking better of it, said coldly—"audacity. You frighten me with your readiness for intrigue. Such a gift will ruin you unless you curb it. I shall not in this case bring you into discredit, by withholding the check to Père Barodet; but Theo, my dear, I have an American prejudice against being fleeced even for the church."

"Oh, very well, if you don't care to pay it, I can. I was thinking of your interest, not my own, when I said it. Of course if you look upon it as a—a—fleecing, I will pay it myself."

Theo began to study the gorgeous costumes about the great chamber.

"Don't talk nonsense, child. Of course I understand well enough: with your French notions you think no amount of money ill spent that wins the favor of the sovereign. There I don't agree with you; I don't think it a good investment, as papa used to say, and, furthermore, I like to do my own giving."

"But don't you understand that there are scores of princely persons who would part with half their fortune to leave such a souvenir with the Empress. It was not the money that gratified Eugénie. It was the proof that a stranger had appreciated her favorite preacher."

"This is worse and worse," exclaimed Miss La Flêche, who looked at Theo in shocked surprise. "If I stand well with the lady, it will be through a fraud, for the very motive that makes the gift of value is wanting. I don't care a straw for Père Barodet. I'm afraid your conscience has been warped by your French association."

Miss La Flêche was an old school-fellow and could talk with freedom to the astonished Theo, who looked on her in good-humored surprise.

At this very moment, while the pair were engaged in this tiff on the moralities, a young chamberlain stepped in front of them and bowing obsequiously, said :

"Her Majesty commands me to inform les demoiselles de la Fléche and Carnot that they are expected to join the imperial suite near her majesty. I shall have the honor to conduct the demoiselles."

Theo radiant with this new mark of royal favor, pressed her companion's arm significantly, as they set out through the crowd, which had now become a crush, behind the young man. They followed him across the glittering floor, a thousand lights dazzling them from the pyramids of crystal candelabra overhead, the glories of France looking down on them from the priceless panels on which the pencil of Paul Vernet had set the lineaments of marshals, generals, admirals and statesmen. Theo wondered what their imperial patron could want with them. But the intoxicating sense of importance inspired in the mere message, that she, Theo Carnot, the bankrupt's daughter, was enjoying an honor and privilege that half the *parvenus* in Paris toiled and schemed in vain to obtain, gave a gleam to her eye and a flush to her olive cheek, that made many a bejeweled, bestarred, and emblazoned bigwig turn with a start of surprise, to examine the exquisite figure.

As they advanced, always led by the young courtier, regulating his steps in respectful obedience to the difficulties of their progress, the *salons* became less crowded. The personages seemed to blaze more resplendently in the stars and regalia of the empire. The ministers of Europe were named to them by their guide as they passed. Princes and marshals of the empires of France, Austria, Russia, and the kingdom of Prussia. Cardinals and archbishops mingled in the stately groups. The conversation which broke out in a loud hum in the distant apartment, was here stilled to a low murmur.

The next moment the two young ladies passed on to the reception-room of the Empress. Here the walls, like

the others, were lustrous with gold, and the panels covered with oil paintings. Though the apartment was spacious, it was at the moment well filled, and lost its fine proportions. Most of the throng were ladies in dazzling attire, with a sprinkling of gentlemen, somewhat less gorgeous than their brethren in the other rooms. The young man who had conducted the friends thither left them, and approached a lady standing behind the chair of the Empress, whom Theo recognized as the Duchess de Mouchy. The duchess smiled and whispered to her mistress. She bent her head slightly without interrupting the conversation.

Madame de Mouchy spoke to the young man. He bowed and returned to the young ladies, who stood lost in contemplation of the scene and its beautiful mistress. Eugénie was at that time in the prime of her mature beauty. Theo wondered at the fairness and transparency of her complexion, brought into vivid relief rather than diminished by the coils of russet-gold hair heaped upon her stately head. Theo, who had a woman's eye for detail, further remarked that her neck and the corsage of pale green blazed with the crown diamonds, the famous Pitt glistening at the point of a dark oblique stomacher, and almost veiled in the rich laces, through which it gleamed like a swarm of dewdrops under the harvest moon. The guide interrupted Theo's reflections by a message from Madame de Mouchy, that they should not quit the *salon* until they had received another message from her.

CHAPTER X.

A FRIEND AT COURT.

THEO and her friend were left to study the novel picture the scene presented. Entirely ignorant of court ceremonial,—for Theo. had most strangely neglected to inform herself before coming—they had only the vaguest notion of what they saw.

Like his uncle, Napoleon III. exacted the most rigorous etiquette in the palace—a single button awry on a uniform, an untimely gesture, would disgrace the delinquent for a month. If at a *fête* or reception the Emperor or Empress honored a guest by a word, all the rest of the company fell back out of earshot. It was this which surprised Theo when the Empress had summoned herself and Miss de la Flêche early in the evening. She would have been infinitely gratified if all the maids of honor, the great dames and dowagers, could have heard the words of the imperial patroness, for she knew they would be the topic of every *salon* before the week was out. All this was to aid Jules. For herself, she argued, she didn't much relish this splendor, hollow, meaningless, depraved. Her reflections were interrupted by a movement where the Empress sat. The ladies arose, and a page going in front to warn the guests, the imperial hostess set out for the dancing-hall. She addressed most of the personages by name, as they arose and inclined respectfully before her. When near the doorway, the Prince d'Amboise entered, apparently in search of somebody. He almost met the Empress face to face. As she saw him, she raised her fan playfully, exclaiming:

"Ah, Monsieur d'Amboise, you are caught; since when has it become *en règle* for a prince to forget his promises?"

"*De grâce*, your majesty, even piety and promises must give way to ill-health. I am but just returned from Baden-Baden for the *fête*, though forbidden by the medical tyrants, who now rule the House of Amboise," said the prince, in gay deprecation of the imperial reproach.

"Very good, Monsieur d'Amboise; you shall now do penance for past sins. At the *fête* of St. Cloud, on Tuesday next, you shall be cavalier to a charming demoiselle, to whom I am about to present you; attend!"

The young man fell into the train, engaging in conversation with Madame le Breton, the familiar attendant of the Empress. On arriving near Theo and Miss de la Flêche,

the Empress, by a gesture, commanded their approach ; then, without turning, directed the prince to come forward. Looking archly at the heiress, the imperial match-maker said :

" Mademoiselle, I have brought this scapegrace to you for reformation—Monsieur le Prince d'Amboise."

The two bowed as if they had never met before and the Empress continued : " Our young ladies have failed in every attempt to reform him. See what your American art can do. He is a *très mauvais sujet*, I assure you, and will require strong measures." She smiled pleasantly at the by no means abashed nobleman, and, turning to Theo added graciously :

" Mademoiselle Carnot, we shall expect to see you at the *fête*, at St. Cloud, Tuesday, with Mademoiselle de la Flêche," and passed away, a vision of power and beauty.

Theo rehearsed the wonders of this night of triumph many a day after. It made her a marked social force in the self-seeking mobs that depended on imperial favor for a thousand schemes of aggrandizement. Its influence remained with Theo long after the kind lady who had shown her so much favor had been driven from the scene of her grandeur and was forgotten by all upon whom she had lavished her generosity. The event brought gold as well as glory, for no sooner was the little American's standing at court made known in the piquant gossip of the *Chroniques* than mysterious gifts came from all sides, the donors asking merely for the privilege of her acquaintance. It helped her business, too.

There were few Americans, of the sort that made Paris their headquarters, who could resist worship of a star moving in such a dazzling orbit. Nor was the triumph without its value to Jules. He was taken up by the rich young nabobs. The desire of his life for horses and equipage was gratified within a week after Theo's standing at court became known. He was made a lion by the sons of the rich American residents, who, with the extraordinary instinct of our race, very soon discovered that he was not rich. They devised scores

of unobtrusive ways of filling his exchequer without leaving a wound to his *amour propre.* One young man, the son of a pushing matron from Montana, with an inexplicable mania for court life and the association of grandees, Washington Lafayette Grovel, called "Lafe" for short by his familiars, actually forced bets on the admired intimate of courtiers, as a pretext to fill his purse to the amount of thousands of dollars.

Others pretended to wage baccarat with him and left all the winnings in his hands, by clumsiness in play, in humorous contrast with their skill when contesting with each other. It literally rained gold into the receptacles of the genius of Rue Galilée, and the house became too small for the levees held day after day, merely to receive the cards of the throng that coveted acquaintance with the friend of the sovereign, as Theo was regarded by her envying and admiring compatriots. All this adulation was turned to the best account, where Theo sagaciously divined that Jules' interests lay. Jules, as the indispensable companion of the rich young nabobs from over the sea, was missed and mourned in the exclusive circles of the Faubourg, where his vogue among the millionaires, as all Americans were held to be, made a great impression. He was seen in the choice boxes at the opera; in sumptuous equipages in the Bois. His name was paraded in all the costly revels of the foreign magnates, at the ministerial receptions, and in places where rank and birth alone are found. Discussing the fairy transformation in their fortunes, Jules said one day, as he and Theo sat alone in the pretty salon of the Rue Galilée:

"If the fortunes of the family are ever restored, *ma chère,* the prodigy will be your work; the rest of us will be as little in it as the globules of water that pass between the mill wheel and the wall, evading the stream that turns the wheel."

That sagacious young person smiled fondly on the handsome eulogist and shook her head. "If I had only been

born a man, all things would be possible. Then I might really do something. But a woman—tied hand and foot, to all the stupidities! It makes me insane sometimes when I see how easily success might be won, if I were only a man." Then, as she saw a humorous expression on her brother's face, she added apologetically: "Not that you aren't worth a dozen ordinary men, but you have too much sensitiveness; you are too conscientious; you have that most useless of all mental baggage—scruples. You must learn to ignore them. It's the only rule for a real success, I assure you! I wish I were a man, all the same, that I might be by your side all the time."

"Why, my dear, what could you do if you were a man more than you are doing? Indeed, I think it very fortunate that you are not one. I am quite satisfied that you are a woman and very proud that you are my sister," and he kissed her hand gallantly. He was greatly surprised by the bitterness in his sister's voice, for Theo's strong point was invariable good-humor and unrestrained gayety.

"Do?" she repeated, dreamily, looking out on the crowds; "I would make men tremble and women—adore me—in vain," she added with a mocking little laugh.

"Yes, but it doesn't help one along much to make men tremble; on the contrary, it would make them avoid one; and as for the adoration of women, any empty head can bring that about. No, my dear, the trembling is a bad means to an end; it drives the lambs away, and when they are timid and when they are in flight, it's a bad time for shearing!"

Up to the evening of the *fête* at St. Cloud, to which the imperial hostess had herself bidden Theo, the house on the Rue Galilée resembled the palace vestibule. Rumor had invested the little American with *carte blanche* for the event, and a crush of carriages blocked the street from early morning until sunset. Great ladies, who would never have dreamed of climbing a stair in their own lordly palaces in

New York or Boston, tripped anxiously up to Theo's fourth-floor *boudoir*, bearing their own letters of presentation from common friends. The invasion became an inundation, and the exhausted young woman was compelled to seclude herself in the convent to escape the burden of greatness thrust upon her. To some she gave notes of presentation to the grand chamberlain and to the Duchess de Mouchy. But she told every one quite frankly that she really was the humblest guest expected at the feast. "Such charming modesty!" declared every body. "She deserves the good fortune that has come to her."

For once there was no exaggeration in the phrase "all Paris." The whole town was talking of the wonderful *fête* that was to conclude the festivities invented for the sovereigns visiting France. The novelty of the event was to be a *bal masqué* in which no one would be admitted without costume. For months the tailors and *modistes* had been preparing sumptuous apparel. When the scene was set at ten o'clock, the journals declared that nothing so dazzling had ever been witnessed, even in the magnificent pageantries that had marked Napoleon's reign.

Theo, in the garb of a vestal, accompanied by Miss de la Flêche as Cleopatra, arrived early to study the people and the place. The Château of St. Cloud was a blaze of light, and the gardens a fairy scene of enchanted illumination. The spectacle was witnessed by thousands, who lingered on the opposite side of the river, in the Bois de Boulogne, until long after midnight. The dancing did not end until seven in the morning. The Emperor, in a plain black domino, arrived among the merry-makers at ten o'clock precisely. The Empress, who had been announced as Diana, the huntress, to every body's surprise appeared also in a plain pink domino and lace mask. She was attended throughout the evening by one cavalier in the gorgeous costume of the Magyar knights, whom every one recognized as Prince Metternich. Theo had been asked to dance by a

mask in the glittering costume of a medieval Venetian, and as they moved through the throng, he pointed out the celebrities. In the quadrille, the partner of her *vis à vis* attracted general wonder. A tall figure, with skin as red as an Indian, wearing a garment of filmy lace, curiously fastened with rare and precious stones. "That," whispered Theo's cavalier, "is the cousin of the Emperor—the Princess Mathilde, the patroness of the Bohemians and the despair of the Empress. The pretty figure in the next set —the shepherdess dancing with the knight of the griffin—is the Princess Clotilde, daughter of Victor Emanuel and wife of Plon-Plon. Plon-Plon himself is dancing in the set *vis à vis* the Emperor, in a blue domino."

At eleven o'clock Theo was warned to be in place to see the famous quadrille arranged for the *fête* by the poet Gautier, "Puss in Boots." As she stood there all the characters of the legend darted out from all sorts of nooks where they had been cunningly concealed. The apartment represented the fairy dell of Queen Mab, and the graceful figures performed the parts so well that they were forced to repeat. Then followed a Venetian carnival, the personages all costumed in keeping with the legendary traditions of that motley fable. As Theo stood lost in admiration a slender monk in the order of the Jesuits came up to her. It was Jules. He had come to put her up to playing a little comedy on an American friend recently arrived in the city.

"But who is it?" asked she, not enthusiastic at the prospect.

"Elliot Arden—Kent's cousin."

Theo started, and it was well that the mask covered her face.

"Elliot Arden?—tell me about him. How is he Kent's cousin? I thought the Kents had no male members, outside of Philip, in the younger generation."

"Ah, it is a family story of a complicated sort—too long

to tell here; but you can have a great deal of fun with Arden. He is young and handsome as an erl-king, with big blue eyes and almost flaxen hair—"

"Ugh!" exclaimed Theo, "just the combination I detest! But how shall I recognize him?"

"There he is—as Lohengrin, the Knight of the Grail. You can mystify him beautifully if you're in the spirit —go!"

And Jules glided away laughing, watching Theo as she made her way to the slender figure in silvery doublet and long flaxen hair, wandering among the incognito royalties on the scene. She followed him for a moment in uncertainty, then boldly placing herself before the shining figure, said, in German:

"Is the Knight of the Swan seeking Elsa of Brabant!"

Lohengrin looked down at the demure Vestal, catching only a gleam of yellowish green through the eyelets of the mask. He was clearly perplexed, for the voice, while unfamiliar, gave a peculiar intonation of knowingness that convinced him that the person knew his name.

"Elsa lost her swan-knight by too much curiosity. Shall you vanish if I seek to know who you are, whence you came, and the name you bear?" As he asked these questions he offered his shining arm to the Vestal. As she took it they passed on slowly through the bewildering scene.

"Yes; curiosity like this ill-befits a knightly spirit; enough to know that I am an oracle and can presage your future, or set you on the path of glory."

"Well, well," laughed the other, "this is wonderful; I was just sighing for a good spirit to lead me safely through this maze of magnificence, and lo, here is an enchantress to give me the chart of life. To begin, what is my name?"

"Elliot Arden."

"My pursuit?"

"Student in law in the École de Droit; entered last month."

"Ambition?"

"A great jurist and statesman."

"That's rather easy; where is the American that hasn't that ambition?" laughed Lohengrin. "But now, Madame Oracle, you have answered questions that any one might solve; put on your divination symbols and tell me," and his voice sank into mock seriousness, "is the student in law to become the profound jurist, the jurist the successful statesman—the paragon to win in love, or be a heartbroken wreck?"

The arm within his trembled slightly as the Vestal replied: "In statecraft and war the Ardens are ruled by a propitiatory planet; in love they are faithless and can expect no faith."

The knight halted so suddenly that his mask partly fell, and the girl could see his face was flushed and his eyes wide open in wonder.

"'Pon my faith, Mistress Oracle, the stars you read must deceive you. No Arden I ever knew was faithless in love, whatever they may have been in war."

"An oracle, like a gas-bill, is not to be disputed, or the light will be cut off," answered the Vestal, with a merry laugh.

They had continued moving during this occult play of wits, the knight evidently searching for some one. At this moment he hurried the vestal rather abruptly toward a figure representing Prospero in his wizard garb.

"I say, Phil," said Lohengrin, in a tone his companion was not expected to catch, "here's the drollest thing; some one who knows me!" Then aloud: "Now if you be an oracle, match your power against this adept in sorcery, the master of Ariel and inventor of pranks, the lord of the isle and tormentor of Caliban. Conjurer of cloud-capped towers and palaces, more airy, though not less magnificent, than this, I present you, comrades in a common craft, Sorcery." Prospero gravely bowed, leaning on his wand; the

Vestal merely bent her head. Lohengrin continued in a tone of raillery: "The oracle declares that the Ardens are faithless in love, and will find no faith. What say you, great Prospero?"

"The oracle should perhaps have said some Ardens are faithless," said the Vestal, the gleam through the eyelet directed toward her rival.

The wizard personage started visibly as the voice fell on his ear, but it was the words not the tone that he seemed to be struck with. He made no answer and Lohengrin said, in evident surprise:

"That's better. It leaves me a hope that, as there are exceptions to the rule of faithlessness in the Ardens, I may escape the doom you prophesy—"

"Come to me when you are in love and I will tell you," responded the Vestal.

"But where shall I seek you? where are your altars? what devotions are acceptable to you? what is the penalty for looking on the oracle's face?" and he made a gesture as if to snatch away the mask.

Theo shrank back out of reach, and with a penitent motion the knight implored absolution. Then she made answer:

"When you are in love I shall answer these questions; when you are in love I shall be near you to keep the course smooth," and she laughed musically and, to the young man, maddeningly.

"What, has Prospero been struck dumb?" asked the knight. "Do his powers pale before the priestess of Aphrodite? Has Ariel quit him? Is Caliban in the ascendant? Has his spirit suffered change into something dull and strange?"

But at this moment the music, which had been stilled for a few moments, fell upon their ears, so soft, sensuous and entrancing—the waltz movement of Undine—that as if by one impulse the Knight and Vestal fell into each other's

arms and moved off in a gliding motion among the shrubbery and ferns set for the Undine quadrille, an enchanting elfin drama in dance and music, the talk of Paris to this day. Leading the goblin host came a figure literally clothed in jewels ; upon her head a glistening net-work of diamonds, blinding in brilliancy ; this again surmounted by conch of opals and amethysts.

"Who is that wonderful being?" asked Lohengrin of the Vestal.

But her oracular powers could not be summoned to answer, and an Oberon at his elbow replied :

"It is the Countess Walewski, wife of the son of Napoleon First and the Princess Walewski. The figure represents Undine ; the one by her side, with the parachute of diamonds covering her head, diamond wings and silver pennons, is the Countess de Morny, representing Air. The lurid person, with flowers of burnished gold breaking out all over her, is Fire, the daughter of Queen Christina. The value of the costumes worn in this quadrille is so great that the doors have been locked and the windows guarded until the precious raiment can be returned to the strong boxes, before a soul will be permitted to leave the room."

It was now two o'clock and Theo began to look for Miss de la Flêche to go to supper. She was forced to accept the arm of the sighing Knight, who had exhausted every artifice to make her reveal her face. They had advanced to the end of the spacious suite of apartments where, on the sound of a single horn, an immense pair of curtains, that the shrubbery had partially hidden was drawn aside, and the startled throng beheld a long vista of oriental magnificence, stretching into distance before them, a realization of the Veronese banquets, down to the slender golden-haired pages, the gold and silver ewers and the porphyry columns buttressing two great balconies, from which the guests could survey the scene, as the Emperor and his royal guests sat down in the first relay.

At the further end of the room a curtain was painted to

represent a continuation of the hall, and the spectator, from where Theo and the Knight stood, could only detect the illusion by the absence of moving figures. Fountains between each of the sumptuously set tables showered purple and crystal streams into silver basins, from which the guests were served the red and white wines of Burgundy and Bordeaux. The attendants were in medieval costumes like the pages, and the astonishment of the guests was so great that for a time none descended the broad marble staircases leading to the center of this ambrosial splendor. The Emperor, who had changed the black domino of the early part of the evening, for a blue one, was seated just below the railing whence Theo and her escort surveyed this masterpiece of sensuous beauty. Napoleon was surrounded by his royal guests and the great ladies of the court, the Empress keeping up a lively conversation with a tall mask, set down as the Emperor of Russia by the prattling gossips of the scene.

While the two stood silently absorbed in the varying panorama of imperial munificence, the Vestal started as a white-gloved hand was laid on her arm. Turning, a Mephistopheles with blood-red plumes, blood-red doublet and black limbs, stood, as the devil stands in the garden, leering at Marguerite as she surveys the jewels. She almost lost self-possession as she started back with a little scream.

"Mademoiselle does right to assume the Vestal. It would have been still better had she taken the silver circlet of Aphrodite herself," and the satanic personage bent low. Theo recognized the voice in an instant, but she marveled that he should have penetrated her disguise.

"How did the princely eye find the priestess in this throng?" she asked with a voice quite different from the one she had used in addressing Lohengrin.

"Ah, I see; we are quits," he cried. "What more natural than that the prince of evil should seek out the angel of light? Furthermore, I am charged by the Empress to see that her charming friends do not lack for amusement. I am

come to lead you to a high place and explain to you the treasures of the kingdoms of earth that surround you."

"Is this the temptation?"

"If you like."

"And if I don't?"

"Then it is a tribute; will you come? I'm sure the Knight of the Grail can find another swan," and he bowed jocularly to the wondering Lohengrin, more puzzled than ever by these flippant references to high personages and sacred things.

"The Vestal," he said gallantly, "has a nobler mission than upholding a single warrior's courage, or inspiring his arm."

"Your silver knight has a ready tongue, which rarely goes with a strong arm."

"In the present the ready tongue goes further than the strong arm, *monsieur le prince*," retorted Theo saucily. "You, for example, could not lift the swords of your ancestors, lining the walls at Amboise; but who, or what, shall keep you from filling the place a Richelieu or a Mazarin, with ready tongues, made impossible to the Comtes d'Amboise?"

"*Ma foi, mademoiselle*, you are a witch, not a vestal. What bird has whispered my ambitions in your ear?"

"As for that, it needs no bird to tell any one who sees the prince and knows his talents, what his future may be if he wills it. You know you told me certain things at the Bellechasse Hotel. It was not difficult after that to construct a future."

"But that was badinage, I assure you; there is nothing so ridiculous as the serious in conversation. I leave that to the English and your unimaginative American men."

"Seriousness is good in its place. It was by a prayer, not by a laugh, that Henri IV. got Paris."

"True, but I doubt the efficacy of prayer emphatically. It would take volumes to tell the triumphs of a laugh, from Democritus, who laughed himself to the head of Greek phil-

osophy, to Molière, who laughed the stage into an equality with the pulpit. Then, too, the place of prayer is in the closet, and we can't conquer the world in the closet."

"Many men have. Indeed, I don't know any who can boast conquest who ever conquered otherwise!"

"But aren't we falling into rather abstruse talk for a ball-room. I'm to have a dance, *n'est-ce pas?*"

This was apropos the waltz measure, swelling in voluptuous cadence from the empty dancing-room. Lohengrin followed them idly at a distance and watched the Vestal as she floated airily around on the arm of her satanic escort. When the dance was done, they came back toward the spot where he and the Vestal had stood, and when Satan saw him he advanced and, bowing solemnly, said: "Sir Knight, I surrender the Vestal to your valorous charge." Then raising her hand respectfully to his lips, joined a mask evidently awaiting him a few steps away. As the Knight and Vestal passed back to reach the corridor leading to the grand staircase, Lohengrin spied Prospero and invited him to be of the party going down to supper. When he joined them they were pressed along in a merry mob struggling in the same direction. Theo caught sight of Cleopatra, evidently bewildered in the crush, and with her Jules, looking about anxiously. She begged Lohengrin to make his way to them and inform the domino that the Vestal waited them.

"But you must pledge me not to make off while I am gone," said the knight with unknightly premonition of the Vestal's good faith,

"I am not an Arden—I never recede from a pledge," she retorted, the eyes gleaming toward Prospero.

Lohengrin bit his lip: there was an almost malignant accent in the way this pleasantry was spoken, that convinced him of a serious meaning in the mysterious woman's previous utterances. "What can it be?" he thought, as he moved off hesitatingly. "Can it be directed at Philip? Has he been jilting some rancorous *intriguante?* Perhaps I can

find a clue by surprising Cleopatra or the monk. Approaching them, he said, with an air of confidence: "Pardon me, holy father, the Vestal whom you see yonder, commands me to bring you, with the queen, Cleopatra, to join us at the supper table."

"The Vestal shall be obeyed," was the response, in a deep, sepulchral voice, which still sounded familiar to the disconcerted ambassador. Philip, on his part, not less piqued than Elliot by the persistence of the vivacious Vestal in recurring to the same theme, seized the absence of his kinsman to penetrate the mystery,

"Is it in the books, the stars, or the heart, learned priestess, that you find the proof of Arden faithlessness?" he asked, trying to pierce the mask concealing the gleaming eyes.

"Such wizard powers as Prospero owns, should solve the mystery, if mystery it be," retorted the Vestal, gayly.

"These powers reveal no trace of Arden's wrong doing."

"Right and wrong are relative terms; the compact that an Arden holds it blameless to break, may be construed as lack of faith, by more rigorous moralists," and the voice had a little tremulous tone, that made Philip start and examine the speaker more intently. Lohengrin, with Cleopatra and the monk, appeared at this moment, and the party, presented with mock formality under their mask names, set out for the tables.

"Holy father," Lohengrin spoke, "you shall act as master of ceremonies, since you have the advantage, I suspect, of knowing all the personalities here; you must tell us the distinguished people we are breaking bread with."

"Ah, no; I refuse that office. I will, if you like, hear all your confessions and, perhaps, if you haven't sinned against me or mine, I will give you absolution," and the monk laughed as he poured champagne with a manipulation of the bottle that belied his garb and talk, whimsically.

"We should fare better confessing to you then, than the inexorable Vestal here, who has taken my horoscope and

detects a sinister spot in the blood of my family," replied Lohengrin, as he laid a *paté* daintily on the plate of the Vestal.

"Though it doesn't become my cloth to say it," the monk went on, "this heathen rival of mine, while ministering to the altars of the exiled gods, is to be trusted implicitly; she is a seventh daughter of a seventh son and has inherited powers of divination—hear her rather for her truth than her cause," and, saying this, the priest bent down and kissed the hand of the Vestal.

"If this be the placating form of devotion to the oracle, I claim the right to follow the priest's example," whispered Elliot to the Vestal, as she drew back her hand, but with no sign of embarrassment or displeasure.

"Ah, no," she laughed, "by virtue of his sacred office the monk imprints the chaste kiss of common ministry. You, as the slave of Mars, have no right to share in it."

"Well, then, if I forswear Mars and take up the symbols of Venus—"

"Still worse—you remember that in love you are—"

"Faithless?"

"Precisely. You must have the uncommon power that some men have of reading your own heart—or, perhaps, you see it in the stars?"

"I have heard it so often from rosy lips to-night, that by 'damned iteration,' I am almost come to believe it."

"Give me time and I will prove it."

"Never, if your eyes and face equal your voice and form."

"Come, come," interrupted the monk, gravely, in answer to a signal from the Vestal, given under the table, in a sign language he had long since mastered on the Rue Galilée. "People talk love when they talk low, and as a son of chivalry, the Knight of the Grail knows what befell the sacrilegious loves who lifted the eyes of the flesh to the vestal virgins."

It was in vain that Philip and Elliot bent every energy,

employed every artifice, to discover the three masked conspirators; for that they were in league to keep up the mystification there could be no doubt. Unlike most mask balls there was no rule for uncovering at this *fête*, where, of course, the names of the guests and their persons were known to either the grand chamberlain or some responsible person of the household. The Vestal not only kept her visor down in eating—she used her fan with such dexterity that her watchful neighbors could not even steal a glimpse of her lower face, and they left the table as profoundly ignorant as when they sat down.

It was six o'clock in the morning when Theo and her friend reached the carriage, and drove off for the Rue Galilée, having carefully evaded the watchful knight and the perplexed Prospero, lest they should follow and identify them. The wonders of this affair were the theme of clubs, coteries and *cafés* for the next month. Indeed, on the fall of the Empire, that unwarped censor of public morals, *Punch*, published a poem ingeniously contrasting that Belshazzar feast with the prison fare of Wilhelmshohe. As for the Parisian journals, turn your files and read the list of great personages, the columns of description of such bewildering dresses, such mines of jewels, such display of plate and crystal—such magnificence, in short, as was never before or since fabricated out of the palaces of the Genii or the dreams of an Oriental necromancer. For us, of course, its only interest is the figure our brilliant Theo played, and the chain of circumstances whose important links, broken in America, were brought within the magnet's scope for reuniting. It is for us to see whether they did unite and what effect the union had in after days and times upon those in whose fortunes our interest has been evoked. Henceforth, Theo and her brother were among the personages of Paris.

So great a person as the Prince d'Amboise was met thereafter at the family dinner-table, and rumor soon had it that the bankrupt's daughter was to be Princess d'Amboise, and

mistress of the dozen more châteaux of that great nobleman. Jules, too, was to be the husband of the cotton princess, and all mammondom joined in doing hearty tribute to so much good fortune. But greatness like this is not always conceded without carping. There were evil disposed persons who hinted ugly doings. Rumors of Theo's apprenticeship in the Rue Scribe were whispered about. But it was remarked that one fine day the dauntless young person rode down in great state to the alleged scene of her studies in sharp practice; that the prince sat in the chariot while she sailed majestically in, and that when she came out, the head of the firm came humbly to the door with tears in her fat eyes, and made the most slavish and groveling signs of deference to the triumphant diplomatist.

After this, the first rumor was amended by the addition of the visit, in which it was stated, as if by ocular evidence, that the young person had bought her accomplice off, and that her present denials did not offset her previous hints and innuendoes. But where or when, or among what mortal people was it, ever that success did not succeed and cover every species of moral nakedness? Much indeed need our ravishing Theo care for the gabble of the envious or the chatter of the malicious. When one has princes and dukes ready to do one homage, why care for the disparagements of the obscure? Theo was in the garden whose blossoms are fire, where the raptures and roses lull the senses. She knew the repose dear to such a nature as hers, and the great were the silly birds who hatched her golden cuckoo eggs!

With social triumphs, however, her commerce slackened. And to lull suspicions she, from time to time, transferred her field of operations to America, going over laden with great argosies for rich clients unable to make the journey to Paris. The profits of this new method, which, since Theo's first venture, has become common, soon began to have its perils and she was forced to display all the ingenuity of which she was a consummate mistress. Her vogue in society threw the Ardens

and Kent within her reach; but she never even remotely alluded to the by-play at the *bal masqué.* She had impressed upon Jules her wish that no allusion should ever be made to the affair, nor to mention in the family that Kent was in Paris. Jules was puzzled for her reasons, but as he obeyed her implicitly was satisfied to do as she said without troubling himself much with the motives inspiring what he thought a singular request. On her own part, she lost no opportunity to ingratiate herself with the Ardens—a somewhat difficult business, as they shrank from public life, and refused half the invitations sent them.

The family had but just laid off mourning for Philip's parents, who had been burned in a frightful disaster on the Hudson river. Mrs. Kent was the favorite sister, and had long acted as mother to Mrs. Arden before her marriage. Philip himself had eyed Theo with startled surprise when he first met her in his aunt's drawing-room. He had seen her as a little girl in New York in the days of his surreptitious courtship of her sister; but the past was never alluded to between them—indeed, Theo met him like an entire stranger, pretending to have forgotten him. Jules had never seen him in New York, and had no suspicion of what had passed between his sister and the former Adonis of the metropolis.

Assiduous and seductive in her court to the family, Theo soon found herself an intimate of all but Edith and Philip, who maintained a reserve rather of instinct than expression. Elliot admired the witty little critic of her countrymen's *gaucheries* in the elegant society of the capital, and defended her stoutly against the acerbities of his cousin and sister. Bella found her helpful and complaisant in guiding her to the wonders of the Paris museums, and her respect for her was not lessened by Theo's persistent refusal to accept the present of even a book from the Arden household.

She insisted thus on a broad equality, which was very freely conceded. The Ardens knew that the family had met

misfortunes, but like most of those who had known them in New York, had a vague notion that French kinsmen had helped them to repair it. As the family and its affairs became more and more known to her, Theo's inchoate purpose of visiting the sin of Clare's blighted life upon the whole family, grew into a settled determination. What misery she could wreak upon them, she could not exactly see. She believed that the Kents had been the obstacle to her sister's happiness, and since the hand of God had visited the sin upon them, why should not these serene sybarites, as she called them, when she looked about her and saw the evidences of princely ease, be made to feel some of the pangs she and hers had been made to suffer through their wicked pride and insolent pretensions? For, if Clare's life and beauty had not been blasted by the miserable engagement with Philip, she, like so many girls, with not a tithe of her loveliness, would have married a fortune, and the poverty and misery of the last six years would have been spared Jules, herself and her father. She would humiliate them, as they had humiliated her; if she could not do it through Philip—and it was plain, that with his prepossessions, which she had tried in vain to conquer, she couldn't—she must do it through some other heart that was dear to them.

Every time her eye rested on the gray hair and the sad face of Clare, she made the covenant anew to herself; she often caught herself on the verge of tears as she compared the beautiful girl, passing her life so listlessly in this obscure home, with the frivolous and painted harridans that posed as beauties in the great world, and her little heart throbbed with a confirmed purpose of wreaking vengeance upon those near and dear the ingrate who had flung away this rare jewel.

But her melodramatic introspections did not change the gayety of her manner. Nothing can equal the address of a young and vigorous feminine intellect bent upon some covert achievement. The duplicity of the Italian is frank-

ness itself to her guileless demeanor; the patience of the Hindoo, impetuosity to the deliberation of her preparation; the firmness of a man, a quivering reed compared to her fixedness. Under a mask of volatility these methods are doubly sinister. Theo often grew frightened at herself as this odious purpose became a haunting spirit, and she resolved to dismiss the demon. She would take her revenge in triumphs over these purse-proud insolents, by leading them in social *éclat*, by patronizing them, by holding the door of the great open or shut in their faces as caprice should dictate. She would become a princess—she turned roseate as this delicious thought came—she would be the grandest dame in the ranks of the *ancien noblesse*, she would be the intimate of royalties, and when these plebeian nobodies approached her, she would drink the intoxicating cup of vengeance to the dregs. Theo was far too shrewd, however, to put trust in purely visionary possibilities. That the Prince d'Amboise had contemplated the possibility of asking her to marry him, she felt confident; but whether he would, she knew was dependent upon the likelihood of her being able to put him in possession of a fortune large enough to re-establish the ancient glories of his race.

If Jules could make a rich marriage she might be a princess, if she cared to be, but, she added, as she smiled at herself complacently in the mirror, that she wasn't quite sure that she wanted to be. She was still young enough to hold to the romance that abides for a season in all girlish natures, before they are depraved by worldliness, and she sighed with a little throb of yearning that gave her a momentary beauty, that does not inspire doubt, of a passion which should absorb her heart, innocent and pure as the visions of her girlhood. Fate was soon to give her the boon; let us see if her good or bad angel rules when the blessing comes.

CHAPTER XI.

AN OCEAN EPISODE.

MEN are not by any means such stuff as dreams are made of. If they were, the burdens of this life would end with the sleep. Pain and pleasure are of the same texture —woven in the same loom. We look before and after, and the horizon is bounded by the same blank. Our loves, like our hates, leave the taste of ashes on our lips ; our triumphs, like our defeats, leave a trail of bitterness—the remembrance of happier things is no less a mirror of our own feebleness than the memory of our failures. The day and the deed are no more of life's purpose than the broken circlet in the pool receding and disappearing and arising anew.

When the name of Theo Carnot came up in the conversation at the *café* supper, Trajan Gray was like an exhausted swimmer, who had buffeted the waves and found a moment's refuge on a friendly rock, where another effort promises security. He was plunged violently back into the swirl of foaming tides which had before borne him down. It was love of Theo Carnot that had made two years of his life a dream. It was horror of Theo Carnot that made life a mockery. Two years before he had met her. He was taking ship at Havre for New York. The vessel was crowded with German, French and even English emigrants. Trajan had been obliged to secure a stateroom by himself, as he had work to do which he felt should be finished before arriving at New York. The vessel sailed from Havre early in the day, and the young man, without acquaintances on board, went forward to the steerage. The sea was not rough, but the chopping waves of the channel had already affected the unhappy crowds packed in the dark and malodorous quarters of the emigrants. While Trajan stood watching the waves, there was a stir at the gangway. A girl came scream-

ing toward one of the sailors, but between terror and sea-sickness found it difficult to make herself understood.

"Well, *l'amie*," said the sailor, not unkindly, "what is it? be calm, there's plenty of time."

"Ah, monsieur, there is some one dying below; where is the doctor? where—"

But the frightened creature could articulate no more. A violent spasm of illness sent her reeling against the rail. Trajan, approaching the sailor, asked if there could be any thing serious below.

"Ah, no; they all think they are dying when the first attack comes."

"But wouldn't it be well to have the doctor among them at the beginning?" said the young man, knowing from experience the horrors of the first days at sea.

"The doctor can't be every where," responded the sailor, shrugging his shoulders. The girl by this time somewhat restored, came back to Trajan, and putting her hand on his arm said, pleadingly:

"It is not the sea-sickness; it is some dangerous—oh—if monsieur would go down himself—he would see."

Trajan's was not the nature to disregard an appeal of this sort. He asked where the sufferer was quartered, and the girl, not daring to trust herself in the hideous atmosphere, directed him. Descending the steep, greasy stairway, he found himself in the squalid, half-lighted, ill-ventilated *schwärmerei* of the steerage. Although no longer liable to sea-sickness, Trajan's eyes swam dizzily as he penetrated into the foul air. Shrieks and groans came from the cots on all sides. Both sexes were crowded into the place in common. There was no sort of privacy. The cots were arranged in tiers and the occupants thrust themselves in as goods are packed in crates. The floors were already foul with *débris* from the sick and the refuse of the midday meal. With a good deal of difficulty, Trajan found the spot where the girl described the dying woman to be. But there were a score

of helpless victims, moaning and twisting on the scant beds. Trajan was about to quit the noisome, fetid cave of misery when, from the lower range of berths, a piercing shriek, that arose above the wails of the others, indicated the object he was searching. The shriek was succeeded by groans hardly less terrible. Bending down, Trajan could barely distinguish a woman's form writhing in convulsive pain. He saw in an instant that it was no case of sea-sickness. The sufferer's hair was in a tangled mass over her neck, and as the paroxysms returned she seized the long masses, twisting them around her wrists, then stuffing coils of them into her mouth strove to stop her outcries with them.

Trajan touched the woman in the berth above, who was lying with a towel tightly clenched between her teeth.

"Can you tell me what is the matter with your neighbor?" he asked. There was no response. He shook her with some emphasis and repeated the question. The woman took the gag from her mouth and, without turning, said, pantingly:

"She is in childbirth.'

The young man shrunk backward with an exclamation of surprise, his blood surging with indignant fury at the system that could thus trifle with the sacred torments of maternity. He hurried to the deck; no one could tell him where the doctor was to be found. He set out to seek him in the first cabin. He had not long to search. The doctor was a young man from the Paris schools—such as are to be found on all the ocean lines—with no experience in medicine or practice, and accepting the post of ship's surgeon for a season, with merely nominal pay, for the opportunities it gives for making acquaintances and sometimes lucky marriage.

Trajan waited at the stairs to hear the report. The doctor came back looking serious. "It is a wretched business, both mother and child will die in that frightful *debâcle*. It is a premature birth brought on by the voyage."

"Can't a room be found for her in the first cabin?" asked Trajan, anxiously.

"Impossible; every state-room was taken ten days ago. The officers are doubled up two in a room to give every available bed to the passengers."

"Very well," said Trajan, determinedly, "I will see the captain." From port to port the captain of a ship is an impenetrable mystery. Burdened with the awful responsibility which rests upon him, he shuns acquaintance with his surroundings, and turns a deaf ear to the most seductive allurements of his transient *protégés*. Reticence is the law of a well ordered ship, and the captain is the most tenacious apostle of the code. Trajan knew this; but he was none the less determined to carry out his purpose. The potentate had just descended from the bridge, and entered his office, where a group of ladies were awaiting him, when Trajan caught sight of his insignia. It was embarrassing to expose the situation before ladies, but if they were French that embarrassment would be but trifling. The young man resolutely advanced to the charge. The captain looked at him grimly as he told the story, and shook his head as Trajan concluded with the request to transfer the unfortunate to his own cabin.

"Who are you?" said the captain, abruptly.

Trajan had not thought of mentioning his name, but now an idea struck him. His semi-journalistic occupation would give him a lever on the old martinet. He said as he handed his card: "I am a journalist, and write for the New York press."

The captain's jaw fell at this. He knew what that meant. A scandal, when the ship reached port, should the woman die. A reprimand from his directors and a damage to the French line, which at that time was under a cloud in the United States.

"Where is the doctor?" he asked sharply.

"I left him in the steerage."

The captain touched a bell and twirled Trajan's card in his fingers. In a minute a cabin boy appeared. "Go, bring

Monsieur Sautane to me ; he is in the steerage." The captain looked at Trajan without saying a word. Then he turned and addressed the ladies who had been looking over a book of charts.

" You heard the tale, mademoiselle," he said, half-smiling at the younger, a dark-eyed, vivacious girl, in a bewitching robe of blue flannel, fitting tightly to her symmetrical body.

" Yes, *mon capitaine,*" she said, casting a glance at Trajan. " I know you're going to rescue this poor creature ; the ship would have no luck if you didn't." As she said this she caught the rapturous smile on Trajan's face and answered it by an imperceptible blush and nod of encouragement.

" Humph," grunted the captain. " It is mischievously irregular, but you Americans must be humored, I suppose. Well, Monsieur Sautane," he said, as the doctor appeared, " what is this comedy you are playing down there ? "

" Ah, *mon capitaine,* it is no comedy, only I don't see what can be done. The woman will die if left there, and since monsieur is willing to give his place, it must be done, to save her life."

" *Très bien*—let it be done—but monsieur understands that he will have to take the woman's place in the steerage, for when he delivers his ticket he will have no status in this part of the ship ? " This was launched at Trajan as one should say : " Very well, young man, if you insist on forcing an unheard-of thing upon us, you will pay for it by bearing the hardship yourself."

" I am deeply grateful to you, sir, for giving her a chance for life, and I don't mind the inconvenience at all. I only beg that she may be transferred as soon as possible."

" Let it be done at once, Monsieur Sautane," said the captain, turning his back and taking up some papers, as a signal that the interview was ended. Trajan could not resist another glance at his ally in blue, and their eyes met. He could have played the part of St. Simeon Stylites and perched on a masthead during the whole voyage for that sympathetic

glance. But as he walked away with the doctor, his mind in a tumult of foolish fancies, that practical official said, good-naturedly :

"You were lucky to catch the chief in the presence of your countrywoman. If you had found him alone he would have scouted such a thing. He is the strictest disciplinarian on the 'Transatlantique.' Not unkind or a martinet, but rigorous for tradition. You owe your victory to *ces demoiselles.*"

Trajan was burning to ask the name of one of "*ces demoiselles*" but resisted. He made a guess that the *demoiselle* who had intervened in his behalf was the American the doctor spoke of, though her French accent did not betray it. There was great commotion and no little jealousy among the other unfortunates able to be on deck when Trajan's *protégée* was carried up on a litter and disappeared in the first cabin.

"I shall leave my baggage here," said Trajan, as he made up a kit to serve him in the steerage.

"That's as you please," said the doctor, busy with the invalid. "I don't see how you're to endure those people over there."

"The people are endurable enough," retorted Trajan, impatiently, "it is the place that is unendurable. I don't see how Christians can allow such iniquities."

Having no further right in the cabin Trajan retraced his steps to the deck. As he passed up the gangway he met the demoiselle, his ally. She looked at Trajan as he came up the steps holding on the rail, and there was a glance of recognition. He had a wild hope that she would ask if the woman was removed, and thus give him a chance to thank her. But her friends were talking—two or three of them in a breath—and in an instant they had all passed down into the clatter of the dining-room. He stood at the rail behind the wheel-house, his mind filled with rosy pictures, taking no definite shape. He wondered who the charming girl

might be. That she was American he made no doubt. That her heart was fine and generous he was sure—else how could she have intervened to aid the woe-stricken ?

In the dim shapes that filled the horizon of his mind, that mental eye which penetrated the unknown heart did not make a distinct picture of her face. That she was not a beauty was certain. But, *per contra*, she was charming. Her eye told volumes of the vivacity of her spirit. The truth is that the object of a young man's fancy is as much a myth as the goddesses of the Greeks. They are like the poet's creations, airy forms that take exactly the shape the longing lover gives them in the cells of his brain or the senses of the heart. The stout ship was well rocked in the bosom of that turbulent bit of deep that divides the British Isles from the Norman and Breton coasts, so that when the harbor of Brest came in sight half the company was prostrate, and Trajan had but few companions in his starlight vigil. He lingered under the canopy, where the more adventurous of the ladies held a small court, hoping to hear the voice of his new ideal. As he passed he heard a voice saying in the English tongue :

" It was an act of real heroism ; the young man deserves the thanks of the whole passenger list."

" Aw, yes, Miss Theo, it was rather stunning," answered a drawling voice with an unmistakable cockney thickness. " Was the young fellah American—I say ? "

" You may be sure he was American ; you don't find French, or—hardly any other nationality capable of such delicacy toward women," said the first voice somewhat stiffly.

" Bless my soul, Miss Theo, you don't mean to say that you think that I wouldn't have done the same, if I had seen the poor creature as you describe ? "

A musical laugh, and then the voice : " Every one's a hero when the breach is forced, as we're all prophets after the event ! "

" Come, now, I say, that's too hard, you know," rejoined

the Briton. "A fellow would be a cad who would do otherwise than your hero did."

"But where is he, Theo? you must point him out to us. Is he young and handsome, or a seminary student in goggles?" (a feminine voice this).

Trajan was ashamed to listen, but stood rooted to the spot, waiting the answer.

"Aw, ya'as, describe your paragon to us, Miss Theo, that we may pick him out in the morning, for, of course, hero is stamped on his whole person," said the man's voice.

"No, I'm not going to give you any clue. He is no doubt modest, elsewise he couldn't be brave, and he wouldn't thank me for making him a curiosity. So you shall hear no more from me," said the voice, that Trajan, in his silly soul, distinguished as the angel's.

"Oh, as to that, it's an easy matter to find your knight," said female voice No. 2. "We can go to the doctor."

"Who seeks the doctor?" said that worthy, coming from the cabin door at the moment.

"Ah, doctor," cried two or three together, "who is the hero of the steerage episode? Miss Carnot refuses to tell us his name or describe him. You were part of the drama. Do tell us."

"*Ma foi, mesdames!* I do not know the name. He is a fine young fellow, a poet or a preacher or something of the sort. But his name can be easily known. It is on his ticket and the quartermaster has that."

"How is his *protégée* coming on?" asked the voice of Miss Theo.

"You should say his two *protégés*, mademoiselle, for a little son now shares the state-room with the mother, and both are doing finely—but that the little fellow needs some garments."

There was a chorus of wonder and then a voice said: "We must have a sewing bee and make up a *layette* for the

little sea king. But, doctor, who is attending the mother? Is there a nurse with her?"

"Yes, mademoiselle, a stewardess is with her."

"Couldn't we go down and see the baby?" asked female voice No. 2.

"Nothing in the world to prevent." Trajan slipped around the corner of the smoking-room as the party arose and passed to the forward companion-way. He was in a glow of artless rapture. She set some store on his unstudied act. She considered him worth a word of delicate praise. He found himself wishing that there had been some actual crisis where real daring might have been his to play, and the poor mother, and her babe, how little they could realize how they, instead of he, had been the workers of a great deed!

Ah, foolish, foolish story!—old as the time when the morning stars warbled the same refrain, always new and always the same. As we think on it, the gray vanishes from under our wig, the wrinkles whip themselves out of our frosty old cheeks, the dimness drops from our spectacled eyes, and we trip again under the apple blossoms in the lane yonder, as the bobolink pours his full throat of song into the soft summer air. It was just as well for Trajan that there was no sleep for him that night. He went down in the filthy pit for a moment, but he saw that he could not close his eyes, what with the despairing cries and the fetid air. Taking his blanket he seated himself far up in the peak on a coil of anchor chains. He watched the moon, sometimes leaning over the side to see the prow of the vessel cleaving through the coruscating masses of water, and breaking it into a fairy spray of phosphorescent sparkles.

The hot sun was beating on his bare head when he awoke in the morning. The ship was plowing through the ocean at a fine rate. He was hungry and felt his garments clinging uncomfortably to his skin. He looked about for a place to bathe. But like all the other provisions for the wretched emigrants, this was a travesty. He was hungry and felt

that he must eat. The coffee was not bad, but the bread was moldy. Hunger, however, made it palatable. Toward noon, as he sat reading on the anchor chains a hand was laid on his shoulder and the doctor said in a hearty tone :

" Mr. Gray, I looked all over the vessel for you last night, to offer you a bed on my cabin floor, for, of course, you know the captain wasn't in earnest in charging you to remain in this den. But luck is in your favor—I bring you a friend who has a bed in his room at your disposal."

" If you will pardon my boldness, my name is Armitage " —and Trajan recognized the voice of the Englishman of the night before—" I shall be most happy to put you up. It isn't right that such self-sacrifice as yours should bring so much inconvenience as this upon you."

" I shall be very glad indeed to take advantage of your offer," said Trajan, laughing, " for, though virtue is its own reward, I think the surroundings count for something."

" Have you heard from your *protégée?* " said the doctor, in a mysterious tone.

" I have heard that there is a baby," answered Trajan, guiltily remembering how he had gained the information. " Are they doing well ? "

" Charmingly. The mother was conscious of her situation this morning, and her surprise was ludicrous enough when she recognized the change in her circumstances. I told her to whom she was indebted, and she begs that you will give her a chance to thank you and let the baby bear your name."

" I don't know whether I should assent to that last," said Armitage, laughing, " out of France, where the search of paternity is not forbidden by law."

The doctor laughed, and Trajan affected not to understand the allusion. So, after all, the voyage was to be an agreeable one. Trajan's luggage was transferred to the cabin of Armitage, and as he emerged on deck, refreshed by a bath and cleanliness, he was seized by Armitage, who said authoritatively :

"I am ordered to present you for muster at the wheel. Next to being a hero, the best thing is to be the hero's keeper—but I say," he added, with serio-comic gravity, "don't monopolize all the ladies, you know."

Trajan manfully resisted a jibe at his new friend's expense, apropos his declarations of the evening before. As they approached the deck-house a charming picture was presented. A score of sea-chairs were set in lines, some facing each other. A dozen ladies were seated on them, some in the grateful convalescence of sea-sickness; others sewing and reading, while an incessant babble accompanied the whole.

"*Mesdames et demoiselles*," said Armitage, "I present you the hero of the ship. If you will say one-half before his face that you have said behind his back, and he can stand it, I will own that he is of the real heroic stamp." Then, looking around and seeing no seat vacant, he added: "Which of you will emulate the virtue of your hero and give him a chair?"

The laugh that followed this sally gave Trajan time to recover his presence of mind. He was presented to each of the ladies, and as Miss Theo happened to have a clear space by her chair, the young man hid his confusion under shelter of her sunshade.

"I was positive, Mr. Gray, even before I saw your card," said the lady, "that you were an American chevalier. Quixotism of that sort is altogether out of the comprehension of Frenchmen. An Englishman might do it, but he would secure a place for himself first."

Trajan was heartily weary of the episode, and turned the conversation by a penetrating observation on the sublimity of the scene and the perfection of the weather. He was startled and delighted to find that the divinity had condescended to look at his card, and felicitated himself on his sagacity in discovering that she was not a foreigner. Before the day had passed Trajan was hopelessly enslaved—but not from any preference or subtle signal of encouragement given

by the divinity. Her charm of mind and manner grew with every change in mood. Her wit kept the company in a continual *qui vive*—not always so much from the thing she said as its intent and the indescribable drollery of manner. Trajan confessed to himself that he had never seen a woman so perfectly mistress of all the arms of social combat.

After luncheon Theo sat down at the piano, and for an hour the crowded cabin was lost in the homes and joys left behind in the exquisite songs without words, or enlivened by the gay staves of Strauss and Offenbach. Trajan sat down in the smoke-room after the event, and the talkative Armitage, with a big pipe in his mouth, came and took the place next him.

"A remarkable girl, that countrywoman of yours, Mr. Gray. She has captivated the whole ship."

"Yes," said Trajan, with an effort, "a very charming girl."

"I've heard of a face being a fortune; but if that young woman's wit isn't a mint, then I shall be buried in a blue stocking."

As the Briton paused, Trajan felt constrained to say something, and quite at random remarked: "Miss Carnot isn't an author," vaguely associating the Englishman's disjointed remark into an assertion that Miss Theo was a writer.

"God forbid," said the other heartily. "So far as I know, she never wrote a line for print in her life."

"I don't share your thanksgiving," said Trajan, good-humoredly. "If Miss Carnot could put half the wit in writing she lavishes in talking, she would rank as an American de Staël."

"As to that," said the Englishman, mischievously, "since no one reads American books, perhaps a freak of book-writing might not destroy the lady in Miss Carnot." Then, as if conscious that even the jocose tone in which this was said did not relieve it of a tinge of ill-breeding, he added: "What an amazing change has come over our insular ignor-

ance of America since that famous *mot* was put out! I have counted the books in railway stalls throughout our island many a time, and I find that American reprints make up fully a third of our current literature."

Trajan laughed heartily. "If you think your last remark an *amende* for the first, I decline to receive it—for it is almost as true now as when it was written, that our literature does not compare with European authorship—with, of course, exceptions that have not been increased since that famous query that so angered my countrymen."

"Are you serious?" said Armitage, taking his pipe out of his mouth and resting it on the card-table in front of him. "You Americans chaff in such a serious tone that I'm never quite sure of my ground. There's Miss Carnot, for example. I talk, as I imagine seriously, with her for an hour, and find out in the end that she has been ridiculing me in the most aërial plunges of my pet hobbies."

CHAPTER XII.

THE SIREN SINGS UNDER THE MAST.

TO Trajan's no small discomfiture, the waif in state room 214 became known as "Gray's baby." He was asked jocosely after its welfare by the male passengers, and even the ladies smiled mischievously whenever the little fellow was the topic. He wisely bore the banter with unimpairable good-humor, which he was the better enabled to do as it enabled him to conceal the passion that was taking possession of him. He had gained another glimpse of his divinity since his first meeting. Going down one day to 214 to see Madame Blaye, as the woman he had rescued from the steerage was registered, he encountered Theo in the room with the baby in her arms, smothering the little waif

with kisses. She blushed rosily when the young man opened the door in response to a careless "Come in," and with the most charming embarrassment ever thrown out as a bait to an enraptured lover, said sweetly:

"Madame Blaye, this is your benefactor, Mr. Trajan Gray." The poor woman started toward him—she had been sitting as he entered, and, to Trajan's unspeakable surprise, fell on her knees and snatching his hand kissed it repeatedly. She strove to speak, but could only ejaculate in French:

"*Mon Dieu, mon Dieu!* How good you are—*beau jeune homme!*"

Trajan was confounded and looked appealingly at Theo who bore the ordeal with comic gravity. Even a lover's woes may be endured, if a woman but make up her mind to it. He disengaged himself somewhat angrily from the grateful creature, who was evidently determined to mark her gratitude by remaining on her knees during her benefactor's call. Trajan ended the scene abruptly by asking if he could be of any service, and then fled. He was quite sure he heard Theo laughing as he reached the outer companion-way. A few minutes later she appeared on deck, serene and apparently oblivious of the scene below. She came where Trajan was seated and declared that she was dying for a tramp. He was on his feet in an instant and the two were soon in the afternoon cavalcade, promenading under the canopy.

Trajan (to himself): "What a joy to be a man, to be able to give an arm to so adorable a creature! Oh, what can't I make of my life if it be my good fortune to win this great gift!"

Theo (aloud, adjusting a cloud of soft wraps around her handsome throat, and displaying the most enchanting curve of wrist, encased in careless gloves of the sort called *mousquetaires*): "Mr. Gray, will you give your immortal mind to guiding my sunshade, so that while it preserves what little complexion I have left it will not obtrude any of its

sixteen points into the eyes of the young men, who seem for all the world like bats on shipboard?"

Trajan (grasping the thick tortoise-shell handle, and so manipulating it as to shut Theo out from the gaze of the envious young men—he was convinced they were envious—and at the same time exposing Theo's complexion to every wanton sun-ray that peeped through the canvas awning, thinks, now I ought to be able to hold the conversation in such a way as to find if I really have any chance. Then aloud): "Miss Carnot, I ought to win the game—with sixteen points start!"

Theo (mystified, but determined to encourage the playful wits): "But doesn't the game require that both should have a cue?"

Trajan (discomfited and shifting to another tack): "Points may be the signs of vantage in chess as well as billiards. With sixteen points I should have all of your game but a few second-rate pieces" (exultingly).

Theo (triumphantly): "In chess a pawn is equal to a king when the game is at a certain stage."

Trajan (crushing all obstacles and pitying the vanquished): "But while the pawn can never take the king, any piece may take the queen."

Theo (reflectively): "But the queen can always manage a stale mate."

Trajan (with pity, turning to love): "Ah, I see you understand chess; pray what is there you don't understand?"

Theo (sighing softly and looking far over the waters): "I don't understand myself; what's more I shouldn't like to; that is, if the result should be the same as when one comes to understand one's fellows."

Trajan (with his heart thumping so vigorously that he fears his companion's arm must feel the movement, and asking himself what such a wickedly cynical speech could mean. Then aloud): "Surely you understand yourself when you realize that your kindness gives pleasure to those you

love; when you know that your accomplishments enliven the spirits of a company like this; when you know that you admire nobleness rather than pretension, honesty rather than sham—a good deed rather than cruelty. Honesty is the key of the heart and certainly there need be no mystery about understanding one's self!"

Artless Trajan, he wanted to say something fine. But not knowing how far to venture substituted secondary for principal terms. Love was the word he wanted to use, but he dared not give that as the key, because if there were no love in this fair creature's heart for him it would have been a poor compliment to invent that as the key to such self-knowledge as he strove to make her see.

Theo (enjoying the young man's confusion, and understanding exactly the cause of his incoherence and anti-climax): "Self-knowledge I have—that comes from a good deal of self-study. But one may know many a thing without understanding it. I know, for example, that the earth turns around the sun, and not the sun around the earth, as my senses persuade me to believe; but I don't understand it. I know that this great iron ship is sailing on water, and my eyes tell me that it should instantly sink as an iron bar would in a basin of water; but I know that the laws of force, gravitation and displacement, make it impossible for these plowing tons of weight to sink in these rolling wastes of water."

Trajan (chagrined and astonished at his own inconsequence and his interlocutor's confident use of scientific illustration, but determined to enter metaphysics to relieve him of his embarrassment—magisterially): "The study of self, like that of truth, has three principal objects: first, to know the virtues and vices of character; second, to be able to discern whether we possess the one or the other in the greater number; and third, to be able to distinguish the one from the other. Now, reduce these maxims to first principles: A lie is a vice, a self-sacrifice is a virtue; cruelty is a vice,

kindness is a virtue; envy is a vice, generosity is a virtue; calumny is a vice, magnanimity is a virtue. Now there is nothing intricate in these, and I take the boldest forms to make myself most readily understood. You hate all these vices, and you admire all these virtues. So far your heart is an open page. But all these may be present or absent in degrees, and the sum of the hate that one bears for them all, is the sum of his goodness, or, in other words, his love for virtue. One may fall into errors as to tendencies, may fall by the wayside when put to the test in phases of these general characteristics, and to that extent he is more or less imperfect. But he is conscious of his infirmities as the time that a dial keeps, shows the perfection or the defect in its machinery."

Theo (with a little yawn): "Dear me, Mr. Gray, one would imagine you a college professor—are you?"

Trajan (startled and disappointed): "No, I'm—I'm a painter, and do an occasional turn at journalism when the fire dies under the kettle in the studio."

Theo: "Delightful—a painter? Then, I suppose, you know the Latin Quarter, and have a dream of a studio there?"

"Yes, I live in the Quarter; but my studio is a barren reality—peopled by dreams."

Theo (tentatively): "My brother is a law student, and sometimes lives in the Quarter. Perhaps you know him—Jules Carnot?"

"No. I know very few of the men outside of the Beaux Arts. I hope I shall meet your brother when I return."

Theo (with effusion): "Oh, you return then, do you? How happy I am! I shall have one friend the more in Paris. I live there, you know."

Trajan (sentimentally): "I wish that I might believe that my presence in Paris would make any difference to you."

Theo (with serenity and *aplomb*): "A friend the more is always a gain in this world. In such a world as Paris, to be

able to count upon a man like you, capable of such self-sacrifice as brought you into notice in this ship, is a boon that any right-thinking woman must be proud to have."

When the wicked witch had led the poor lad on until the amusement palled, she feigned fatigue and with seductive grace presented him a volume of Balzac to read aloud. And so the afternoon passed away, and a half-dozen other afternoons, for the ship broke her shaft the fifth day out and had to make for port with sail. This prolonged the voyage to nearly two weeks, to Trajan's great joy, who was probably the only one on board that heard the verdict with satisfaction. Ten days out a terrific storm came on. The ship was on the banks of Newfoundland, wallowing in a heavy sea and dense fog. At midnight the fog lifted and the wind whistled through the rigging in shrieking discord almost human. The storm rose to a gale toward dawn. The darkness was as thick as the fog that the wind had driven from the surface of the sea. So soon as the pitching, rolling and plunging of the ship became continuous, the passengers huddled in the dining-room. The English and Americans ventured on deck. Distrusting the seamanship of the French, they counted the chances of safety as very slight. The larger number in the cabin faced the danger with calmness.

Some of the French women, however, shrieked with every lurch of the ship and implored invisible personages to save them. The night wore away with things apparently going from bad to worse. The loss of the screw left the ship at the mercy of the waves. The hatches were closed, but long before morning objects were floating in the cabin, the passengers having taken refuge on the tables and settees as well as in their state-rooms. Trajan had come out of his state-room at midnight and looked around for Theo. She was nowhere to be seen. Every woman of the company seemed to be present, even Madame Blaye, pallid and terrified, with her bairn hugged to her bosom. Trajan went over and comforted the poor creature. "But we shall sink," she cried

piteously, "we shall be swallowed in the frightful sea. Oh, *mon Dieu, mon Dieu!* what an imbecile I was to leave the land!"

It was useless to reassure her. She knew the vessel was going down, and at each lurch she dropped on her knees pressing the little one tightly, closing her eyes and expecting the gurgling waters to stifle her. The ship seemed fairly spinning on its beam ends, when, toward three o'clock, Trajan saw Theo. coming tranquilly from the passage-way leading to the state-rooms. She did not seem terrified. She was dressed carefully and carried a small leather satchel in her hand. She climbed over the water as it accumulated at the end of the room, and as Trajan came up and gave her his hand to reach the table, her manner though lacking the gayety, was as serene as among the admiring group of the calm afternoons on the promenade deck.

"I suppose we shall have small chance to escape with such imbeciles as the French seamen!" she said in her ordinary tones, as Trajan sat down beside her.

"I think we shall pull through," replied Trajan, surprised by the girl's self control. "They have been handling the ship well, Armitage says, and if the storm goes down with sunrise, we shall be all right."

"Meanwhile, what measure have you taken in the event of the worst?" asked Theo with composure. "I am dressed ready for the small boats and confide myself to you!"

Trajan trembled and his heart gave a great leap. "Whatever human arm can do, Miss Carnot, to rescue you from peril, I will do. It is no time to tell you the grateful joy that fills my heart that you should have conferred this priceless privilege upon me." She rewarded him with a ravishing smile of confidence.

The night seemed reluctant to break. The great ship rolling and plunging desperately, rose almost perpendicular for a moment; then meeting a mountain of water, fairly stood suspended, quivering, and fell until the brain reeled with the giddy speed.

The morning broke clear and cold and the ship tore on under a wan and threatening sky, over masses of crashing waters, that fairly resembled liquid icebergs, so solid and compact did they rise on either hand before breaking over the deck. The sun arose and the wind calmed as suddenly as it began, but the swell of the sea still flowed and fell in vast furrows of icy water.

A fog followed, but relieved of the more acute movement of storm and wave, the passengers brightened up into vivacious confidence. The ship was flying under full sail, for the captain dared not slack before the gale. It was midday and the table was set for lunch, with all who were able about it, when the vessel suddenly trembled and a great crash could be heard forward! The men ran to the deck. The women turned pale and clasped their hands. Every eye was eloquent with despairing inquiry, while every lip was mute. Trajan had rushed above before the vibrations ceased. He suspected a collision with a ship or iceberg, but every thing was shrouded in mystery on deck. The captain vouchsafed no details; the officers, under the strict discipline of their chief, refused to answer the questions asked them. But Armitage knew from the manuveers of the mate and the gangs at the small boats that the crisis was at hand. He warned Trajan to be prepared to fight his way into the life-boats if need be. On this hint the latter wrote on a sheet of his note-book:

"Get ready, in the smallest space you can, what is indispensable, and be prepared at the foot of the staircase when you hear your name called.—T. G."

As he passed to his room to prepare himself, he slipped this into Theo's hand. As he returned, she gave him a glance of confidence and comprehension. Armitage arranged with Trajan that one of them should stand by the boat on the side away from the wind, with a pistol in his hand, while the other marshaled such of the ladies as cared to venture in the small boat. There were nearly a thousand souls on

board—600 emigrants, 300 first cabin, and the crew. The boats could not, even in a smooth sea, hold a third of these. The ship's carpenter, upon whom Armitage kept his eye, emerged from the hold in the forward part of the ship and made a report to the captain. That officer made angry reply ; the sailors near the group suddenly suspended their work, and, as if by a common signal, rushed to the boats. They surrounded him with pale faces. He gave the substance of the carpenter's report. A deep dent had been made in the iron plates of the bow. There was a slight flow of water in the bulkheads, but there was absolutely no ground for despairing while the fires held out and the pumps could be worked. He ordered the officers to take their pistols and force the men back to their duties. He set the example himself by confronting the group at the first boat.

While trying to sleep, toward three in the morning, a low voice at Trajan's ear aroused him.

"I think our time has come," said the Englishman. "I heard the captain tell the mate that the water had put out the lower fires. Now, you go and call Miss Carnot. Tell her that we can not undertake to care for more than one woman each. And (to spare herself the anguish of quitting the others) to let them remain sleeping. I shall wait for you by the skylight facing the smoke-house."

Trajan tapped lightly at Theo's door. It was instantly opened. "Is that you, Mr. Gray?" she asked.

"Yes. Are you ready to go on deck? We may have to quit the vessel at any moment. Armitage will care for your friend, Mrs. Marquand, and I will devote myself to you."

"I shall be with you in an instant. You may just as well wait for us above. We can reach the rendezvous with less chance of creating alarm if we go alone."

By seven o'clock the council of officers were convinced that the boats should be gotten ready, and the captain was aroused. He confirmed the judgment of the council, and

without any undue sign of emotion he came into the cabin, and in a few words announced that he thought the ship was in danger of sinking; that those who cared to should be prepared to take to the lifeboats; that if good order were maintained every cabin passenger would find room; but that haste or crowding would swamp the boats; those who chose to remain on board should aid the others in getting into the small boats; as for himself, he proposed to stand by his ship until she went down! Trajan had listened to this brief seaman-like statement, expecting an outbreak of terror when its import was realized. To his amazement there was not a cry. A great sigh swept through the crowd, but nothing more.

In ten minutes there were two hundred people on deck. A line of sailors, flanked by stout ropes, stood between the first-class and emigrant deck holding the third-class passengers back in case they made a rush. But these poor creatures, deceived by the easier motion of the vessel, were unsuspicious of the impending danger, and occupied themselves with breakfast. During the night all the forward boats had been brought to the rear of the ship. The comparatively easy motion made it possible to swing them to the davits so soon as the others were lowered. The first boat, with twenty women and ten men, beside six sailors, reached the water safely. The second did not fare so well. It was dashed against the ship, overturned, and its load of fifty scattered in the waves. Some of them were rescued, but the larger number were whirled out of sight in the boiling waters. This checked the fever of many to embark.

Fully sixty returned to the cabin, preferring to die peacefully, supported by human companionship, rather than risk the horrors of the small boats. Trajan, Armitage, Theo, Mrs. Marquand, and twenty others were assigned to the stern boat, commanded by the second mate. The provisions, instruments of navigation, and a plentiful supply of wrappings, were packed into the boat. The first woman

lowered, in her terror, fell into the sea, and was swirled under the waves. For a moment the rest shrank from following, and many fled back to the cabin. Theo came promptly forward, and was lowered into the boat. It was soon full; but as the vessel still offered a faint possibility of rescue, as signal-guns were firing and distress signals flying, the boat was not cut off. Six boats were lowered, as Trajan could see, counting them as they were left far in the rear.

The little boat, heavily laden, was soon wretchedly uncomfortable quarters. The men were divided into reliefs for bailing it out, and some of the women insisted on sharing the toil. The day dragged on miserably. The ship still rode the water, and gave no signs of going down. The fog gradually raised, and when night came the stars could be seen. The mate judged that the ship was not far from Newfoundland—within two days' run of New York under ordinary circumstances. The sun rose in a clear sky; the sea became more restless; but the vessel did not seem to advance perceptibly. Toward noon several of the small boats under sail could be seen within range. Suddenly the danger signal on the ship was seen to dip. Then the report of a cannon was heard. The officer on the bridge in great excitement swept the sea with his glass: "Glory to the Mother of God!" he shouted, "we are saved. Yonder is a ship of our own line and bound for our own port."

Then there was excitement, and the sudden movement of the people to see the deliverance at hand put the little craft in more deadly peril than she had yet encountered. But the good news was true. The great black line of a steamer drove rapidly in sight. Boats were lowered, and within two hours the passengers in the small boats were transferred to the new comer, which proved to be the Ville du Havre, of the French line. She took her sister ship in tow, and three days later both arrived safely in New York harbor.

Meanwhile, Trajan had been counting on the peril to repress the exuberance of his divinity. But that extraordi-

nary young person, though grave, never softened into the mood which the most obtuse lover knows to be essential to love-making. In the small boat, it is true, there had been no opportunity, even for those electric glances that sometimes ease a lover's miseries.

When the ships had come to anchor at quarantine, the passengers were restored to the abandoned vessel to reclaim their baggage. Theo had come on, ready to land in a bewitching street costume of the strikingly modest sort this young woman, of all her sex, seemed to know best how to manage. She had much on her active mind now that the fateful voyage had come to a close. She had managed her undeclared lover with consummate address. She had been winning, sympathetic, but never tender. She was always sufficiently mistress of the moment and of herself to freeze the genial current of his lover soul.

Strive as he would, he could not get into words what she read in his appealing eyes. It was by drollery, ridicule and inconsequence she held the poor fellow from the declaration he was dying but not daring to make. She had learned his purpose of remaining in New York only a month, and quite incidentally, shortly afterward, let him know that she should be in New Orleans until September—it was then July. Trajan had hoped that he should see her in New York. She sighed as she regretted the impossibility, but hoped for better fortune when they should both find themselves in Paris. The vision of it gave Trajan's face the glow of an afternoon sunset. As the vessel lay idly in the stream at quarantine, awaiting the customs inspectors, Theo took the vacant seat by Trajan. She was in the greatest embarrassment—she confided to the young man. Trajan assumed an air that proclaimed his readiness to emulate the twelve tasks of Hercules.

"Have you much baggage, Mr. Gray?" she asked, averting her yellowish green eyes so that the mere edge of their fascinating sparkle was visible to the young man.

Trajan laughed; "No," he said, "I'm in light marching order; two small portmanteaus with change of clothing and unfinished sketches."

"How fortunate!" she sighed. "My wretched brother had arranged to catch the steamer at Brest, and his trunks were put on at Havre with mine. They are filled with all sorts of men's trappings, and of course I could not pass them at the custom-house. I want to save the delay and the duties as well, for you know," she added, "women are born smugglers, and I am going to ask you to take the keys and assume ownership."

Trajan was enchanted to relieve the helpless sister from the brother's burdensome charge. He welcomed it as a mark of confidence and a sign of future intimacy, when the hurry of travel would not interfere with his wooing. She bade the young man farewell as the vessel touched the dock and gave him an address to send the keys to, with the trunks. She was going immediately with friends to the country. Trajan took the pretty gloved hand, not daring to venture on a gentle pressure.

Theo's friends were looking on, and Trajan murmured a low farewell. He was not questioned by the customs officials as to his ownership of the trunks, but to his great annoyance the officer, on examining the contents, declared that they would have to be sent to the office, and asked the young man for his address. Ignorant of the contents, Trajan could make no coherent objection, and deeply chagrined he set out for his lodgings. The next day, as Trajan was about quitting his room, a card was handed him. He didn't recognize the name. On entering the parlor an elderly man with a keen, scrutinizing pair of eyes arose and asked:

"Mr. Trajan Gray?"

Trajan affirmed the fact, when the stranger proceeded at once to inform him that he was from the detective branch of the customs office, and his mission was to learn if the trunks delivered to the inspector of the day before were

really Mr. Gray's property. Trajan hesitated to answer, and the man having waited a moment continued:

"If the property is yours you must appear before the collector to answer certain interrogations."

"What reason have you to doubt that the trunks are mine?" asked Trajan, defiantly.

"We don't doubt it," answered the official, blandly; "we know they are not yours—we know the owners, and we know how you came to be charged with their entry into the port!"

"Oh, very well; since you know all about them, I have no further responsibility. You will, I suppose, deliver them to the owner when your formalities have been complied with;" and he delivered the keys and address to the official.

"That's business," commented the man, as he retired, "you have acted wisely, young man."

But Trajan was not convinced of this. He felt that Theo would be plagued with the affair, and he reproached himself for not foreseeing the *contretemps*. She had left the city, and he knew of no means of reaching her save by sending a note to the address to which she had directed him to send the trunks. This he did at once, going over the whole case and regretting any annoyance his failure might cause his charming friend. The note might be forwarded to her at New Orleans, and he might, he thought with a glow, hear from her before he returned to France. His business in New York was a law suit, and he was kept in the courts pretty constantly during the week. One day, as he was passing Stewart's—in those days the universal bazar for women—he caught sight of a form that seemed familiar entering a coupé. His pulse quickened as well as his steps, but before he could get near enough to see the face, the horses were careering rapidly up Broadway. He looked in vain for a cab to follow, but in a few moments he had lost sight of the coupé. He was sure that he had seen Theo No other

woman had that graceful, bird-like movement of the neck, and that individuality of costuming. What could it mean? Had the news of the seizure of the trunks arrested her Southern journey? But if so, she would have certainly sent him her address.

Armitage called the day after. They had breakfast together and drove to High Bridge afterward. The Englishman was full of amazement and grumbling. He divided every thing he had thus far seen into two bulks—one "beastly" and the other "stunning." The filth of the city astounded him, the luxury of the hotels and private residences appalled him. Seated at breakfast he interrupted his amusing comments on the country to say:

"I say, I saw our stormy petrel yesterday."

"Who?" asked Trajan, not identifying the person thus figuratively apotheosized.

"Our heroine, Miss Carnot."

"Oh, no, that isn't possible; she left for the South a week ago."

"Well, she's returned, I assure you, for I saw her yesterday at a shop in Broadway. I couldn't very well mistake the person. I defy any one to see her once and confound her with any body else."

Trajan related his own adventure and the coincidence was dismissed. Returning from High Bridge toward six o'clock, the carrriage with our friends was blocked for a few minutes just before emerging into Fifth Avenue. Trajan was watching the crowds on the footway, when Armitage suddenly seized his arm, with the exclamation:

"There, by Jove! if that isn't the petrel, then I'm not in my senses." Trajan barely caught sight of a figure as the carriage shot past, and he, too, was sure that Theo and no other was the person. It was too late to turn and follow the other vehicle, even if the carriage could have been extricated from the blockade. There was no available pretext that would have imposed upon Armitage, and Trajan shrunk

from exposing his young passion to that jocular cynic's pleasantries.

A week later he embarked for Europe and was soon absorbed in his old artist life. He found means of meeting Carnot, however, and explained the facts bearing on his luckless trunks. Jules changed color when the incident was mentioned, but when the finale was reached looked relieved. He thanked Trajan, warmly, and informed him that the affair had been settled. There had been some gloves or other dutiable trifles sent his friends, and the custom-house had collected ten times their value. About Theo he said nothing, but Trajan hoped for other opportunities to inquire about that charming being.

CHAPTER XIII.

"EVERY DOOR IS BARRED WITH GOLD."

TIME, the tamer, held a loose rein on Trajan's heart and hope during the next few blissful months. He lived and moved in the exaltation of love's lucid atmosphere. He nourished the image his hope created with all the forces and fibres of heart and brain. His hope fed upon his mental vitals, as the young of the pelican feeds upon the physical. Its roseate promise broadened his horizon and stirred his vitalities to unheard-of effort. Living on his fancies alone, his work was a joy and his forces tenfold. Doubt was a blank, the future a dream—tangible, real, stimulating. Never had his imagination responded with such subtle delicacy to his artistic longings; never had his brush embodied so readily the airy shapes of the mind. His nimble fingers could hardly keep up with the teeming fancies created by his ardent impulse.

Most men, when they love for the first time, live on the

image of their love. Trajan was recreated in his—it was his armor—armor, did I say? It was shield, spear and battle-axe! Panoplied in it, he went forth to combat with a serenity that was proof against every form that "the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune" take. Never had his brain responded in such fecundity to his touch as now. His next picture took the second prize of the year in the *Salon*, and he waited with buoyant eagerness to lay his laurels at the shrine of his goddess. Theo had written Jules of the young man's devotion on the memorable voyage, and Trajan was welcomed cordially in the Rue Galilée.

Papa Carnot overwhelmed him with effusive testimony. Clare made him feel that he was no stranger, in her undemonstrative way. The young man was hungry to hear of Theo! When was she to come back? His heart sank dismally when it was announced that she had been forced to put off her return indefinitely. Trajan was gloomy company after that. He racked his brain for some device to make it possible to enter into direct correspondence; but he remarked that the family were very reticent in alluding to Theo's plans. However, he meant to be patient, and win the confidence of the household. His visits to the Rue Galilée were thenceforth regular, if not altogether comforting. But Theo, evidently by intention, was rarely mentioned. He obtained a photograph one day from Clare, and set to work with rapture to make a portrait to surprise her when she returned.

Poor boy! the happy, happy hours he spent over it, and when it was done, Pygmalion-like, dreamed it was the reality. There was great wonder in the Rue Galilée when this masterpiece came to hand. Trajan blushed and palpitated with joy at the encomiums of the family. It was Theo to the life, they protested. Never had such a bit of portraiture been seen! Jules was loudest of all in the jubilee. The *technique* he declared to be fine as Bonnât or Duran, and insisted that it must go to the next *Salon*.

Still the months dragged on. Theo had desired her warmest remembrances to be given to her marine hero, and Trajan was lost in dreams for a week, wherein his Anadyomene was confusedly identified with a vivacious young person, of a yellowish-gray cast of eye and nut-brown complexion. At last, on a day that remained in Trajan's mind long after as a season of roses, rainbow hues and amaranthine atmosphere, the news came that the petrel was to take ship the next week for home. A wild purpose to be at Havre, nay, to go to Brest, and welcome Ariadne came into his mind, but he shrank from the audacious evidence of self-esteem and devotion. The studio that had witnessed a year of prodigies, was for the next ten days intolerable.

He walked the streets lost in delicious reverie, the old grinning faces that looked down from immemorial stones, transforming themselves into fairy forms whispering welcome to the queen that was coming over the sea. By a mighty effort he let the whole day pass after Theo reached the Rue Galilée—where you may be sure the lad was watching—for the intoxicating joy of seeing her pass with her boxes from the cab to the door. It was a wonder that Theo, who rarely missed any thing, had not detected her adorer, for in the rapture of the first glimpse he started impulsively from his concealment, but drew back crimsoning at his own folly.

The next day his impatience could hold out no longer. He was at the Rue Galilée at the very first hour admissible by convention for a gentleman's call. He ascended the four long stairs, as birds may be supposed to reach their airy bowers. His card was taken in by Céleste, who had come to regard the young man with undisguised approval. She smiled encouragingly.

"Yes, Mademoiselle Theo is come, and the voyage has been agreeable."

Trajan sat in the charming boudoir-like *salon*, every object in it eloquent of Theo's incomparable taste and adaptiveness. The impatient lover started as the door opened; he sank

back speechless as Clare came into the room. Theo "begged her kind friend to excuse her to-day. She was worn out, and immersed in certain business affairs which were pressing. Wouldn't Mr. Gray call on Saturday and dine?"

Trajan found voice, to thank Clare and accept. Then, dimly imagining that Clare must be shocked at his dullness, he excused himself, declaring that she ought to grudge these first moments with her sister, and retreated. He was a good deal shaken by this rebuff. He walked aimlessly down the avenue to the Park Monceau, and sat down in the secluded corner of one of the copses. He could not at first realize the sensation. Presently the stunning sense of the stroke subsided, and he began to reason. How stupid he had been! Of course, he was hasty, selfish, and even ill-bred, to presume upon his small claims to be received so soon.

The poor girl had been worn out by the twelve days' journey on the slow French line, and then the eight hours by rail and the half day in the custom-house at the station! He ought to have known better, he declared, with a great ray of comfort breaking in on him in the misery of the first lugubrious stupefaction. He saw it all now. She was not, perhaps, even dressed when he sent Céleste to her a few minutes ago. But reason shattered some of the frail fabric of this roseate sophistry. If she had real feeling for him, a tithe of what he felt, no fatigue, no affairs less important than life or death would have prevented her seeing him for a moment, if only to press his hand and look to see if the true light still flamed as a beacon in his eyes! He counted the days of probation. It was then Tuesday! What could he do with himself meanwhile? The studio was intolerable. Oh, fool! if he had but kept the portrait, he thought, he would have a pretext for inviting her over. Stay! He had heard of her devotion to Jules. He didn't much fancy Jules, but he would get a portrait of that favored youth ready and unmask it before her in the studio!

Now he had something to occupy him; for wasn't he working for her? Luckily he knew where Jules's photograph was to be found. He had noticed the name when looking over the family album. In a twinkling he was in a cab and in a half-hour he had secured, from the great Nadar himself, in the Rue d'Anjou St. Honoré, the aristocratic profile of his beloved's next of kin.

I protest that the *epos* of love like this should have a vernacular of its own. It is a desecration to tell of such hopes and fear, such heroism, such faith, such constancy, as Trajan's in the worn shreds and patches that paint the every-day follies of mankind. Day and night, to the great distress of Madame Betty and Trip, whose blinking eyes followed him in wonder, the restless devotee toiled over the labor of love. By Saturday the portrait was fairly in colors. It required but a few touches to make it perfect—not the speaking marvel of natural grace and radiant enthusiasm that the portrait of Theo presented—for not only the air and the sky but the flowers of the field had been plundered to make that a masterpiece. Still Trajan was not wholly dissatisfied, and that is strong testimony for a lover's work to be laid as a tribute at the feet of his mistress!

The honest lad kept himself busy with this self-imposed task until the very last minute—so that his eagerness should not push him too early on the scene. It was five o'clock when Céleste welcomed him with her most friendly smile in the Rue Galilée. He did not ask for any one—but merely sent in his name. He had put himself under severe restraint; but he felt his temples throbbing as he stood looking out of the window. He turned as he heard a step approaching. It was not Theo; he knew before he turned that it was not; but his heart sank none the less.

"Make yourself comfortable, Mr. Gray," said Clare, in what for her was a cordial tone. "Theo was obliged to go into the city this morning. She should have been back before this. I expect her every minute."

Six o'clock came and the soul of the scene was still wanting. At half after six dinner was served and Trajan, too sad to talk, sat down silently.

The solemn banquet was half over when the bell rang and Theo, without waiting to remove her bonnet, tripped into the room with a stream of charming apologies pouring from her breathless lips. She was followed by Jules, who began to explain as Theo gave her two gloved hands to Trajan, meanwhile protesting the odiousness of her conduct and her hopelessness of pardon. But it would have been more than a sin of omission that Trajan could not forgive. Her ardent eyes were on him; her willful gaiety in all its impressive versatility was in his ears. He was as absolutely under the spell as the helpless prince under Ariel's wand, Prospero's plots and Miranda's beauties. But there was none of the virtue of compassion in this witch's art. She bubbled and glistened and sparkled during the dinner and evening. She had a thousand questions to ask Trajan. She narrated with inimitable drollery the scenes of the voyage, Trajan's *début* as hero, and wound up by asking the young man if he had heard any thing further of his "baby." Tantalized and delighted, he was horrified when in a lull in the conversation he found that no one was in the *salon* but Theo, Jules and himself. It was eleven o'clock. Theo had chidden him sweetly for wasting precious time over the wonderful portrait and vowed that such a hand should occupy itself with emperors, kings and princes alone, and that she meant to have the Empress sit for him. Trajan winced.

"I have another portrait that I think you will be interested in. I want you to come over with Miss Carnot and your brother to see it on the easel, and suggest such changes as are needed—for it is a friend of yours."

Then, very happy, and dreaming dreams, Trajan went out into the glorious moonlight, and when he lay down in his studio the sun had lighted the world and was flooding the eastern gables of the great city.

What need to prolong the piteous story? Weeks and months went by in this blissful purgatory for Trajan. She was always gay, pungent and sympathetic. She knew how to stimulate the young man's pride in his art. Indeed, Trajan never attained the perfect mastery of form and color he reached during Theo's vicarious regency. She was not always accessible to her adorer. For weeks at a time she was with grand friends at Compiègne, where the court gave great *fêtes*, and Theo, by the command of the Empress, had her part to play. But Trajan had found time to broach the subject of his hopes. He had not been discouraged in set terms. Theo had turned the conversation in the most bewitching way. Once, as if by accident, she had expressed earnest disapproval of marriages between people without assured means! A man must be very selfish, she affirmed, to ask a girl of refined tastes, accustomed to luxury, to assume the burden of a poor man's life!

It took Trajan a week to rally from this. But he grew buoyant in convincing himself that this dictum could not apply to his case, for was he not a rising artist, and wouldn't he, in a few years, command his own price? Hadn't he sold a portrait of one of Theo's friends for 1,000 francs? So in this self-exalting mirage Trajan built the foundations of his future, and pursued the phantoms with fatuous trust. It was in the beginning of May, 1870, that the blow came. It had never occurred to the young man that there might be another lover. He knew that the gallants of the Faubourg admired the brilliant American; but he was tranquil so far as they were concerned, for he knew they would never offer their coronets to a dowerless beauty if her charms were the counterpart of the Venus de Milo and the spirit of de Staël. He had vaguely heard, with a sickening dread, of a rich Englishman who was her cavalier at court. He determined to end the agony. But, "like one who having unto truth, by telling of it, made such a sinner of his memory to credit his own lie," he made no doubt of the result. Trajan wrote,

asking Theo to be at home, and received a kind affirmative.

Just as he set out the postman gave him a handful of letters. Too much preoccupied with his fateful mission to read them, he barely glanced through the pages. One was from Armitage, dated San Francisco, and evidently a long time *en route*. He barely glanced at the beginning, and slipped it in his pocket to read later.

Theo was alone and radiant, but with such unobtrusive adornment as she above all women seemed to possess the secret of fabricating.

"You look serious, Maestro," as he had for a long time been familiarly called in the family. "What's the secret burdening your mind? Another masterpiece for the *Salon*, I'll wager, and I'm to be called on to give final judgment."

"Yes, Theo, it's a masterpiece, and you're called on for final judgment. I want you to be my wife; I love you—I loved you, I think, the first moment I saw you, two years ago, on the ship. I have thought of you by day and dreamed of you by night every hour since then. Your eye has been on every stroke of work I have done; your voice has sounded in my ear in the silent hours of the night and through the long days of toil which its echoes cheered and made happy. All that a man with some powers may do, I shall do under your inspiration. All that a woman can dream in the way of devotion I have ready to dedicate to you. Say that you will be my wife," he cried, taking her hand in both his own.

She made no attempt to draw it away. She was looking dreamily at her own portrait, painted by Trajan, on the wall opposite. I doubt if the blood in her veins increased a single throb as this passionate and manly prayer fell upon her ears. She was prepared for it; she had known from the first that sooner or later it must come. She kept her eyes fixed upon the picture so long that he turned uneasily, and was reassured when he saw where her glance rested. But her eye was not fixed upon the picture to conceal any lurking infirmity of purpose. Theo knew the curious freaks these lambent orbs played. She

knew that when they were not a mask for mockery or merry-making, they had a trick of changing into a sinister opaque green, like the tiger's in the cage when tantalized by the sight of prey beyond his reach. She was not in reality a particle embarrassed to find or utter the words she had predetermined to use. But, in spite of her preparation, in spite of her resolution, the woman in her ruled the hour, and she lost the trick of jaunty concealment she had counted on.

The delicious tribute of the man's rare homage filled her with a sense of intoxicating, irrepressible triumph. The light in his eye, the passion in his voice, the adoration in his manner displaced the mental balance she had counted on, and she fairly prolonged the interval to enjoy to the utmost the intoxicating realization of her own power over such a fine nature. It was a grateful evidence to her that, in spite of her worldliness, she was mistress of the charms and potentialities that win genuine love!

It was, above all, proof that neither sincerity, affinity, or what not, that the shallow prate of, are needed to conquer the purest love, captivate the most single-minded and aspiring. The hand that Trajan held neither resisted nor affirmed any thing. She sat quite still, contemplative—almost as in a reverie—and her eyes still averted themselves from his tender, fervid scrutiny. The trumpets of a passing regiment and the trampling of galloping squadrons sounded outside in the still and fragrant air. Trajan strove to clasp her waist—fondly believing the silence assent. But she drew back with a slight heightening of color and an ominous glitter in the particolored eyes. In a thick, impulsive, trembling voice, Trajan spoke:

"Oh, Theo, you cannot be surprised at this—you who see all things so clearly. You must have seen this—you must have known of my love? Have you no love for my love? no answer for my prayer? no hope for my heart?—I cannot have pained you by saying what I have said?"

She still evaded his glance; she was conscious of the

green in her eyes now; she withdrew her hand softly from Trajan's reluctant fingers, and rose from the divan. Once upon her feet she was safe. He could no longer fix her eye with his own frank, eager glance.

"No, Trajan, you do not surprise me. I have foreseen this for a long time, and I have striven to avert it. I am honest in saying that I thought you would discover the uselessness of your love for a woman with my objects in life—I—"

"You love some one else," interrupted Trajan, dolorously.

She shook her head almost impatiently. "No, I love no one better than I love you." She put out her hand in pleading deprecation as Trajan started rapturously toward her. "Stay—hear me out. Love is a luxury, and I have a purpose in life that would make it a crime in me to heed my heart in marrying! In most cases it is a stern parent that plays this rôle—but I have the fortunes of my family to care for, and I must be my own tyrant." She looked at him in a far-off, dreamy way. "Were I a rich woman—as I was born—or were you a rich man, I love you well enough to marry you. But I'm not." Her voice trembled a little as Trajan made a movement of uncontrollable shocked surprise.

"Hear me out; what I am going to say, while it gives you pain, will convince you that even if the conditions were such as I have outlined, you would not find such a mate as you seek in me."

He seized her hands and strove to say something, but she extricated them quietly, now perfectly mistress of herself, and putting them behind her confronted him as he stood, stupefied and incredulous.

"You have nothing; and I would no more think of marrying you than of throwing myself into the Seine, from the Bridge of the Holy Fathers—"

"Oh, my God—my God! Theo, do you know what you are saying; what you have said?" cried Trajan, suffocatingly.

"Perfectly. I am proclaiming myself an adventuress, soulless, cruel, heartless, repulsive—a woman that no good man could love, and no honest woman pardon."

She walked to the farther end of the room, turned and came back, and, looking at Trajan as he sat with his head buried in his hands, stroked his hair lightly, then bent over and kissed his forehead. He started shuddering from her; then, rising, said, supplicatingly:

"Oh, Theo, in the name of a merciful God, by the memory of your mother, unsay these monstrous things—say you were jesting—say that you were trying me. In God's name give me a chance to live in the world without loathing you."

She put her hands behind her, twisting the long tapering fingers spasmodically.

"You feel that my wicked lips desecrate you. I had meant that they should touch you before I revealed myself. But we can't always order ourselves, I find. Admit my wickedness. Admit the monstrous in all I have said. Isn't it honester to tell you frankly the purposes that divide us than to let you go away in doubt? Unless my heart were another's, on what pretext could I reject such love as yours?

"I am more magnanimous than the ingrate who blighted Clare's life. He didn't even bid the woman he had won good-by." She checked herself suddenly, then added, recklessly, "A life dedicated as mine is to righting family wrongs, would drag a nature like yours down. I own frankly that nothing can stand between me and my purpose. Ten years ago we were beggars; to-day we have means that in this country make us rich—every penny of my devising. It is a necessity of my nature to rule, or mold, or call it what you will. I rule this house. I shape the thought as well as the actions of every member of it. I must marry, if I ever do, a man who can rule me, but his purposes must be greater than yours. I can't afford the luxury of mating for love. You are not malleable. You are not even adaptable. You

have, of all qualities, the most dangerous and useless for a man in your station—conscience and the perversity of principle. You abhor the things I adore. The aims I cherish are to you wicked and abominable. I love rank, lineage and the accessories of station. You despise them. I shouldn't mind your poverty if you were free of these compromising trammels."

Trajan raised his hand pleadingly to stay the flood of this premeditated moral abdication. He strove to speak, but she went on relentlessly—triumphantly, even, exalted by this luxury of final, free self-portraiture, as when in anger one gives way to the repressed hates of a life.

"Oh, don't, don't!" cried Trajan, rising. "I won't hear such raving! It is an impeachment upon my manhood. I met you an innocent, pure girl. I will leave you before you can shake that conviction. God bless you, farewell!"

Without daring to look at her, he hurried out of the door and down the stairs. Startled by the sudden exit Clare entered the *salon*. Theo was lying prone upon the floor, her two hands clenched over the undone masses of her hair.

For a month Trajan lay in the studio in the delirium of brain fever. Toward the first of May the doctors sent him to Barbison, as he babbled incessantly of green fields and forest glades. In that charming woodland he gained strength and calmness, and toward the middle of May returned to Paris. But he couldn't work. He shunned his friends and passed hours in wandering through the ancient quarters of medieval Paris.

On the morning of the 14th of May he sat in his studio, when Madame Agay laid a mass of letters before him, calling attention to their long neglect. He took them, and mechanically looked them over. Among others, the letter from Armitage, that he had thrust into his pocket unread on the fatal visit to Theo. It was a closely-written four-page letter, and toward the middle Theo's name appeared.

"Before I left New York I found out the secret of our sea-witch. We were right in our surmise—that it was she we saw in the carriage that day. By a curious chance I met her a few days after your departure at the house of a friend to whom I brought letters. She was, as usual, the charm of the company. She kept every one in a roar, and what is unusual with brilliant women, her own sex admire her as enthusiastically as the men. I asked my friend when Miss Carnot had arrived in New York, and she told me, naming the day we came in on the steamer. But she added: 'She is a very busy woman, and has been closeted with lawyers and agents ever since, to the great distress of her friends, who expected her at Newport and Saratoga.'

"'Then she has passed all this hot season in New York?'

"'Yes, I have seen a good deal of her as we were school friends together.'

"Now I shouldn't take the trouble to go into this detail were it not for what follows. One day a paragraph appeared in all the morning papers hinting at a seizure of a great quantity of smuggled diamonds and other valuables under high duties, in the trunks of a lady well known in the most exclusive society of New York. The authorities had been apprised of the traffic, but it was managed so skillfully that actual evidence was difficult to obtain. Warning had been received in the customs office that a large invoice of diamonds and laces were to be sent by the steamer arriving one day in July. But owing to an accident at sea two steamers came together and the officers were disconcerted until the trunks were delivered into their hands by an innocent agent of the smuggler—a young artist home on a visit from Paris.

"The *modus operandi* of the ring is ingenious; women carry on the trade, and on the home-voyage manage to get acquainted with bachelors with little baggage, and as the ships near New York confide to them that a brother or

father who had sent his baggage on board was detained at the last moment, and was obliged to wait for the next steamer. Of course the polite bachelor is willing to take the keys and pass the baggage through the custom-house as his own. The value of the present seizure is over $100,000.

"I think I need add no comment to the foregoing. I wouldn't have bothered you with the nauseous story were it not that I thought I saw an interest stronger than mere friendliness in your devotions to *cette beauté du diable.*"

The sunlight faded into starless night. Betty and Trip were sorely perplexed by the strange unmoving figure of their master. It was nearly midnight when he raised his head from the desk. He moved with curious tranquillity. Taking a pen, he wrote rapidly, and sealed a note, which he placed on the mantel. Then, looking around the room, changed his coat and vest, emptied his pockets of everything in them, and with a caress for the dog and cat, softly quit the chamber. He wandered off to Montmartre, and sat down. It was a walk of four miles or more, and the exhaustion brought on prostration. He made an effort to rise, but nature refused to respond, and he dozed on the green sward until the burning morning sun aroused him. He was still weak, and the morning passed before he regained strength to walk back toward the river. Arrived there the expectant crowds distracted him. The day wore away. When the mind that Trajan Gray lost in the Rue Galilée returned to him, Elliot Arden's kindly words were in his ears, and the fervor of his honest accents healing the hurts that treachery had made in the young man's heart.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE CLUB OF THE THIRTEEN THIRTEENS.

THÉOPHILE GAUTIER recounts somewhere in one of his many whimsical prefaces, that it was the habit of the great De Balzac to prepare his myriad mind for the shaping of the motives that were to rule in his Human Comedy by diligent reading of the Code Napoleon. Byron conjured the fiery spirits in the brandy bottle. Victor Hugo consults the stars. None of these suggestive sources would reveal to us the conditions governing the lives of the personages in whose careers we may now be supposed to be absorbed. Chained to the car of marching events, this history is forced to follow where fortune leads the personages; the historian serving modestly the part of chorus, obtruding his mask now and then like Bottom and his friends in the poet's Elfin Dream. In deference to the just prejudice of the reader Trajan's odious association with the anarch forces of rational heterodoxy, Communism, has been kept as much as possible in the dim outline of the picture, as Josephus, writing of Saul, would have touched with reluctant lightness upon those episodes in his life after he passed from the feet of Gamaliel and the perfect teachings of the law, when his head was turned on the journey to Damascus!

Like the majority of the toilers who sought the shrine of art in Paris, Trajan had found the Areopagus of liberty open to him, and he had gladly entered. It was as natural to become a conspirator under the Empire as a patriot in the colonies under King George. All that was self-respecting, generous, inspired by chimerical impulses, gravitated as inevitably to the secret clubs as magnetic particles to their affinitative poles. Of the ten thousand students in the Latin quarter, seven-tenths were regularly enrolled—members

in distinctive societies, having small relation with the united or general union, but all animated by a love of liberty and vague dreams of revolution. The executive society acting for all, was known as *Les Treize Treize*—The Thirteen Thirteens—but commonly called the *Treize*. In this Sanhedrim there were thirteen deputies from every club, representing artists, artisans, architects, divinity, law, medicine, journalists, poets, novelists, farmers, dramatists, soldiers, and politicians. In this wonderful company were to be found the most eminent names in all these callings. Prévost Paradol had been president until he joined the Ollivier Schism, and in his place Gambetta had been uproariously installed.

This organization was in relation with subsidiary societies, called *filles des Treize*, in every Commune in France. Five thousand francs a year were set aside in each to go into the treasury of the central Commune, whenever the Empire was overthrown. Its constitution was modeled on the Brook farm experiment, but its political scope was the decentralization of France. Its articles forbade war, general taxation and capital punishment. Taxes were to be levied by the Commune or township alone. There was to be no army; no navy; no executive; no general ministry. Each township in France was to regulate its own affairs, and when complications arose they were to be settled as individual litigations. By the abolition of the centralizing forces of government, the ambitious were to be shorn of opportunities to entangle the people in wars, waste the public substance and distract individual efforts from the only legitimate purposes of life, subsistence and happiness.

This earthly Elysium was not wholly believed in by all the enthusiasts who made up the membership—but all believed firmly that a Republic governed on the Jeffersonian principle would emerge from its solidarity. Trajan, as president of the artist delegation—urged the perfect feasibility of the Commune—based, as he said, on the creed of the first com-

munard, the Nazarene. Sometimes asked by his opponents in the General Assembly, why the doctrines were not practiced in America, he would retort, that it was because the fathers had left their work but half done. That "the country had fallen into the hands of the slave drivers, when the constitution was adopted, and had been seized by a plutocracy in 1868. That the fate of the union was a proof of the wisdom of the plan of pure township government, or Communism, as the tendencies in America were precisely those which had driven France to revolution in 1787. More of the people's money was wasted in Washington annually than would subsist all the homeless of Europe in the dignity of small peaceful citizenship as the Commune contemplates." He was listened to with great attention, but the ranks were firm, the ambitious and self-seeking ridiculing the idea as a dream, the sincere and generous worshiping it as a new gospel, that should restore society to patriarchal repose.

Human judgments, though rarely leaning to the merciful, unlike criminal justice, do consider pleas in mitigation. For a decade the world saw only the atrocious in the idea under which all that was vile masqueraded in Paris in 1871. Hence you are to forbear with Trajan now as you see him the evangel of a creed that was later to stand for every thing monstrous and abhorrent in revolted human nature. The doctrine of Communism, as the sagacious reader knows, is but a half truth, until human nature changes.

The world is ruled by half truths infinitely more mischievous, but their incompleteness is not yet acknowledged, though perfectly demonstrable. "Society rests on half truths, crutches of clay," as Trajan once called them, discussing the subject in the *Treize*, "which dissolve into their component elements, when the inundating waters of light arise about them and leave their victims helpless in the mire of infidelity and cynicism." The "whole truth," he proclaimed, "is always radical. One truth must, by its very completeness, impinge on some other truth, as two globes touch in revolving. It is

only when a verity is launched into the forces of the mind that commotion and revolution result! Loyola launched a fact among the pigmy half truths of his time that broadened the narrow faith of mankind; so did Pym and Milton and Cromwell and Voltaire, and the result was violent effervescence and truth left as a solid residuum."

The Treize embalmed these mystic theories in a pamphlet, and Trajan was regarded as a new Rousseau.

Elliot was curious to be initiated into these wonderful symposiæ, and while the family were in transit to Crécy, Trajan took the opportunity to gratify this laudable research into the infinite of ideal politics. Trajan, working at his easel, and Elliot, lounging among the treasures of the studio, the foregoing was confided to him, as a possible convert to the Samaritan creed. Or sometimes, with Philip, the two young men explored the medieval mysteries of the old quarter, with a delight as profound as Hugo's in "Notre Dame."

Trajan knew his Paris as intimately and reverently as Balzac or Sue, and could discourse by the hour on the worthies that made the Marais and Latin Pays the home of history and legend. This resource in Trajan bound Elliot by a new bond; he knew Paris historically, but its architectural wonders, not found in the books, he knew only in the superficial way most strangers are satisfied to pass over the obscure memorials in which its older quarters abound. In the quarter called the Marais, where the splendid society of the old capital was concentrated, Trajan revealed edifices upon which the eyes of Richelieu had rested familiarly, thresholds over which a Retz, a Maintenon, a Condé had stepped daily; gabled roofs under which Madame de Sévigné had prattled those delightful small-beer chronicles which reveal the wit and gayety and love-making and intrigue and tragedy of the time, when France was as great as the French were joyous and polished and adventurous in love and war.

In these fanciful jaunts they dined wherever the pangs

of hunger overtook them in the fervor of their exploration. Under the luminous revivals of Trajan, Elliot began to comprehend the passionate devotion of the sons of Lutetia to the city of their sires. He was hardly less surprised at the young man's knowledge of the city, than his acquaintance with citizens. In every street he was stopped and saluted fraternally, and Elliot remarked that the people were for the most part artisans of the middle or working class.

"When, in heaven's name, do you find time to know all these folk?"

Trajan laughed. "I don't know half of them—hardly even by sight—but the signal of the Treize makes us all comrades. I give it more from curiosity than any thing else. I like to see the universality of our brotherhood."

"I should imagine all Paris part of your band, from the number you meet."

"All Paris will be, you may be sure, before many years."

Once or twice during these rambles, the friends encountered Jules Carnot, who stared in undisguised amazement at the young millionaire's companion and vicinage. He made much of Trajan in his new attitude of confidant to the envied Arden, but the painter did not invite the intimacy. His coldness and taciturnity when Jules made one of the party surprised Elliot and Kent, who talked it over as another of Trajan's strange "ways." Philip joined the tours, as he laughingly told Trajan, to keep a conservative guard over his impulsive kinsman, lest he should be entrapped into membership in the Treize, to help establish the Commune!

"I'm afraid," he added, as they emerged from a bewildering maze of tortuous lane-like streets—grim tunnel cuts in the solid piles of massive creamy stone—"that our adroit friend, Napoleon III., hasn't secured the safety he imagines, if after a hundred years of demolishing and street widening, this wonderful quarter has many counterparts within the

walls. A well commanded mob could hold such impenetralia as these a month, if well provisioned."

"Ah ! if it ever comes to that," said Trajan with a tone of solemn conviction, "there'll be food enough. All the great markets are near this ancient center and the river is close enough to serve as a base."

"But unless the soldiers join the mob—I beg your pardon—deliverers, no such contingency could come to pass ; bases of supplies would never enter the problem — a few volleys of artillery and chassepôts on the roofs, would soon convert you to an imperial peace."

"Well, it may be so—unless I am greatly mistaken we shall have a chance to test the matter one of these days. The madness of the imperialists points to an early opportunity, and you may be sure there are half a million desperate enough to try the issue. They are rushing to war, and their extremity will be the republic's opportunity."

"A reason the more for its baseness," retorted Philip with a shrug ; "mischief is the measure of the mob in politics and war, and your friends will discredit whatever they intend of good, by striking even their enemies in the back."

They passed over the bridge of Arts to the Latin quarter, under the portico of the Immortals, and up the Rue Mazarin to the Rue de l'Ancienne Comédie and entered the Café Procope. Dinner over, they remained to meet the students, who made the place a rendezvous in those exciting days. Every one seemed to know every one else so intimately that only given names were heard. Trajan explained that it was more precaution than intimacy, as the spies of Pietri abounded in the place, reporting the incendiary vivacities of the over-inflamed propagandists. The conversation was carried on in the general loudness that marks the prandial Frenchman, sipping his coffee in chalice-like goblet—"Mazagran" as it is called.

"And is the café just as it was when Beaumarchais sate here

that famous first night that *Figaro* failed in the Comédie? opposite," asked Elliot, as he gazed around at the red plush sofas and marble-topped tables.

"Hardly any change, except in the upholstering," replied Trajan. "Revolutionary as they are in ideas, the French are the most conservative and preservative of races in habits and surroundings. These walls, as you see them, Beaumarchais, Marshal Saxe, Voltaire, Diderot, John Law, Franklin and the worthies of the cyclopedia, saw them a hundred years ago. The lower floor covered more space in those days. Up stairs every thing remains the same. You shall see the table where the young Voltaire sipped his tipple, played ecarté and recited verses from his wicked Pucelle, to the roysterers of the Well-Beloved Louis' frail court. It is a mosaic of names, carved by the wits and celebrities of those gallant times, and is worshiped as the manes of the godless old cynic who chattered his brilliant blasphemies over it. But hush, there is Gambetta, with a speech in his eye." At the entrance of the Hotspur of the Republic, every one suspended the phrase on his lip and waited to salute the dark swarthy figure as he passed from one to another of those he knew.

"What is the matter with his left eye? it has a fixed and glassy stare, quite horrible to see," asked Elliot, after the leader had shaken hands with Trajan and passed on up stairs, where he always sate—from eleven o'clock until one.

"It is glass; he is said to have put his eye out to prevent being apprenticed to a watch maker in his native town of Cahors. Let us go up and hear his comments on current events. He reads the papers aloud and then gives, what the French call, his appreciation of affairs."

Gambetta was standing beside a column when the young men reached the second floor. He was then quite slim. His shining black hair fell like a mane to his shoulders. His tawny southron face shone as if in the exuding of the

oils with which Provençal food is garnished. He was in vigorous health and looked thirty, while he had passed his thirty-eighth birthday. Dressed in the limit of Bohemian carelessness—an alpaca frock and loose baggy trowsers, not long enough to cover his scarlet stockings, he would have been taken for a druggist's clerk in slovenly *negligé*. His hands were large, clumsy, and very white, in grotesque contrast with his reddish-brown complexion. His manner easy, jovial, gay, he seemed to be the natural comrade of every good fellow waiting for a revolution to turn up. His voice, as he read, was like the lingering echo of silver chimes, clear, resonant, penetrating. He stirred Elliot to the marrow as he read the report of a recent speech of the Emperor, interpolating a biting gibe at each pause. With these came animated responses from the rest as the sentiments they cherished in the voice they loved rang out over the din of clinking glasses. While Gambetta was reading, another group entered and took seats near Trajan and his friend.

Every body in the room bowed and Trajan whispered the names: Gustave Flourens, Dombrowski, Rigault and Ferré, of the advanced communist party. By midnight the great hall was quite full and Gambetta rapped the meeting to order. He then reviewed the political situation and felt sanguine that events were moving so fast, that it was safe to ask his friends to be ready to take the responsibility of government. The recent *plébiscite* shook the Bonaparte dynasty. The army upon which it rested was falling away.

Flourens spoke to the same effect. He had reports from all the International Lodges. The people were waiting the signal; "When it comes, we must not only be ready to rule, we must be prepared to execute the robbers who are plundering France." He asked that an executive council, such as Danton directed, should be formed in advance and he craved the glory of sacrificing the chiefs of the imperial conspiracy. The faint applause following this sanguinary sally, did not discourage Ferré, a slim boyish looking fellow

with pallid, whiskered and malignant face, large lustrous black eyes, hidden under steel rimmed glasses—from supporting the proposition with fervor. He, for his part, desired to be assigned the place of executioner. He would make such an example of tyrants as should render the people free from any future seizure of their rights by the cattle called kings and emperors. He desired to have as his epitaph, the man that beheaded Bonaparte and that arch-Jesuit his wife. He continued in this strain, growing more and more vehement, until several voices called him to order.

Trajan rose and glancing in reproach at the speaker, declared himself shocked by such sentiments. For his part, he lamented that a noble cause should be made equivocal by the expressions of such intention on the part of any of its members. "The cardinal doctrine of the creed that holds us together," he said, is "sinlessness from blood. How then, my comrades, can you reconcile such ferocious utterances as we have just listened to, with loyalty to our order? I for one repel them. I for one declare that if Madame Bonaparte were in peril from these comrades, I would protect her at the risk of my life. I would do more; I would have my right arm cut off before harm should come to Bonaparte or any of the renegades who keep the people from their own by seizing such incendiary sayings as these we have just heard, and holding them up as the cardinal principles of liberty. I repudiate murder in any form, legalized by a false system of laws, or condemned by the conscience of mankind, as assassination."

Trajan sat down, acclaimed by three-fourths of the company. Ferré, rising, came to the table, his eyes gleaming wickedly through his glasses. "I congratulate you, camarade. We shall see whose methods receive the suffrage of the majority when the commune unfurls its flag."

"Yes, we shall see," replied Trajan, tranquilly, "but I give warning that if yours is approved I am no longer with the movement."

"Your speech was enough to show that, it might have been pronounced in Bonaparte's ante-chamber. I recommend you to try it there," and with a sinister laugh he rejoined Rigault, who broke out in boisterous laughter, as the sallies were recounted to him.

When the meeting broke up, Elliot pointed out a workman in a blouse, who had been furtively writing while the speeches were going on. He had, Elliot said, listened to Trajan's remarks and taken down every word of them.

"It is a *mouchard*. He is sent here by Pietri, chief of police; at every meeting there is a different one. Sometimes a student, sometimes a workingman, sometimes an elegant lounger. These assemblages are only blinds, our real work is done in a subterranean hall adjoining the Cloiserie de Lilas, where the students swarm by thousands to dance, and slip out unobserved by the spies."

"Do you know you have made an enemy for life of that Ferré fellow? I never saw malignity so horribly stamped on a human countenance as it was on his while you were speaking. If this republic of yours ever comes, with any thing like the excesses of 1793, I advise you to give Paris a wide berth."

"He's a poor animal, that. I had a row with him in the session the other night and shall report him for misfeasance at the next meeting."

The next night, as a contrast, Trajan accepted an invitation to the Jardin Mabille. Philip joined them with Jules and the Vicomte Bellechasse.

"This is the antipodes of the feast of reasoning revolt you offered us last night, Gray," said Elliot, as the two entered the fairy lanes of light and beauty. "Your devotees worship the coldness of Platonic sensuousness; here we have the ministry of the carnal."

"Yes, this is where Cæsarism trains and debauches its worshipers, and you'll see the result when men's work is expected from these effeminate voluptuaries."

"What a wonderfully beautiful place it is though! What a shame that it should be such a haunt of high life degraded. I should like to have Bella and Edith see these wonderful effects of illumination, in the grottoes, that fantastic play of hues on the sober linden leaves. The place is enchanting to me and I own I always have a mad impulse to dance when I come."

"What! do decent people dance here?" asked Trajan in surprise.

Jules, who heard the question, laughed immoderately. Slipping behind the two friends and taking their arms he pushed them forward under the glare of the circular network of lamps that made the dancing circle bright as midday. A superbly arranged orchestra, led by a princely-looking person in full evening dress, and decorated with an order, was playing. On the shining floor surrounding the canopied pavilion of the musicians a score of dames in magnificent trained robes, sparkling with diamonds, were at pause between two parts of an Offenbach quadrille. As the music struck up and the dance began Jules said:

"You are in the best company in the land; do you see that brisk, middle-sized young man, who looks if he were dying of consumption? That is the Duc de Grammont Caderousse, whose fortune is disappearing in supplying the caprices of that stately blue-eyed blonde, moving in a sort of minuet step before him. Nor is she to be sniffed at, monsieur," he added, as Bellechasse and Philip grinned. "That is the companion of princes, 'friend' of the Emperor's cousin Plon-Plon, queen regnant of the demi-monde."

He mentioned her name. It was the famous English Pompadour, whose carnival left a swath of ruin in the noblest families of France.

"That handsome fellow you see there is the Prince d'Amboise, slim in fortune, but of the proudest house in France, and with titles enough to fill a page of the Almanac de Gotha. The little brunette dancing with him presided

for years in the villa of the King of Holland, at Meudon."

"Bellechasse, wasn't there some scandal about Amboise?" asked Philip.

"Yes," said the vicomte, "he married, irregularly, an English girl who was thought to be enormously rich. She turned out poor, his people wouldn't recognize the marriage, and so soon as he learned that she was poor, he didn't care to. The girl's people carried the case to the courts, but he knew he was perfectly safe. The ceremony performed between minors, or without the consent of the family, is null in France. The girl went mad, and his family to escape her importunities put her in a madhouse. She escaped, however, and was found in the Seine the other day. She left a little girl, or little boy, I don't remember which. It was kidnapped by the girl's family, and the Prince is looking around for another parti. He is inordinately ambitious and dreams of attaining the power of his great ancestors, who were ministers under Henri IV. and Louis XIV. He has brains and capacity, and if Henri Cinq ever comes to what he calls his own, he will be a modern Richelieu."

"I can see from where we stand," continues Jules, after the vicomte ceased, "the sons of three ministers of the Empire, a half-dozen marquises, including that pitiable creature De Foulk, who married the diva. The Empress brought about the match to save the marquisate from the poor-house. The wedding *dot* la marquise gave her daughter-in-law was a box of pearl powder of which the noble family alone have the secret. *Figaro* declares it a bonanza for the diva as she will force all the impresarios to use it in the opera. The marquis, who used to live in very cheap restaurants, now wastes heaps of gold on the opera dames, who fail on the scene. He has been the main dependence of a gambling club in the Place Vendôme since he married the diva's millions. In return for all this I am told he treats her to the rod that Solomon advises for the unruly—in the shape of fists."

"How on earth could a sane woman ever marry a man with that face? Profligacy was never more plainly stamped," said Elliot, in a tone of disgust.

"You don't know much of women, monsieur," responded the vicomte laughing, and raising his shoulders, while his eyelids drooped, "a title, if it be sonorous enough, will catch any of them from the Puritan Anglaise to the piquante, *insouciante Americaine.*"

"Perhaps I don't," said Elliot a little coldly, "but I venture to dispute the last assertion. Only our shoddy people and *nouveaux riches*, who have no countenance at home, marry abroad in the way you say."

"It may be true, monsieur, but Americaines are always in the market here with heaps of gold to exchange for titles; if you doubt, go over the list with Jules at your leisure. I can count a score already married since I came into the social world, and I know of several who would not refuse my own modest title and impoverished exchequer. But I mean to set myself high and try to get beauty with gold," and he laughed quite complacently at this candid confession of acquiescence in the ruling code of the time.

The dancing had reached an Eleusinian abandon of movement by this time, and the young men walked out under the leafy arches, where the birds, astonished by the unduly prolonged light, murmured musical remonstrances from the verdurous bowers and grottoes—scarcely heeding the amorous whisperings of the boozy *gaillards*, as they advanced through the fairy dells.

CHAPTER XV.

A CHÂTEAU AT CRÉCY.

THAT much-contested point in old-time debating clubs, the pleasures of city or country life, finds no place in the unsettled problems of French existence. The Frenchman is as rare as a white blackbird, who does not count upon the time when the sordid struggle of city life shall come to an end, when he shall betake himself to the village, vale or brookside where his younger years were passed. Or, if city born, to some secluded suburb of the town where he may share his heart with Pan and Pallas. While the city of the Violet Crown was never dearer to the Greek than Paris to the Frenchman, the latter sighs for the fields that the former never beheld but with disgust. It would perhaps be rash to say that Crécy was the most charming landscape in France, every mile of which captivates the lover of the tranquil and picturesque, but it is safe to say that no other equal space of the earth's surface is more favored in the natural and artificial beauties that enchant the imagination. Though but an hour from the teeming life of Paris, the little valley wherein the ancient village nestles seems as distant from the madding crowd as the most secluded hamlet of the Savoyard Alps.

Elliot made it a point to wait for his friend, lest he should make some pretext of not coming at the last moment. At the little station of Esbly they were entrusted to the hospitable care of Madame Perrinot, who drove the old-fashioned diligence to all the little towns between the railway and Meaux—famous as the episcopal seat of the renowned Bossuet. Madame Perrinot had the reddest cheeks and blackest eyes ever seen on a mortal woman. Madame's only griefs in life were a rival line and a drunken reprobate of a husband. The latter she managed with intrepid decision when the worst came to the worst, but to circumvent the other she

was forever called on to exert the most diverse expedients. Could she have been at her diligence door and the station gate at one and the same moment, every thing would have worked well. But, alas, the bloom of her red cheeks could be in one place only. Claude, her small son, was not always equal to retaining the clients her persuasive bloom captured at the station gate; for it must be owned that the rival diligence was far more inviting than the decrepit nondescript Madame Perrinot put at the disposal of her patrons. What with the red cheeks and cordial welcome of "La Perrinot," as she was called for short, and the recommendations of her clients, she bore off most of the wayfarers descending at the station. It was noted, too, that the men invariably gave the preference to La Perrinot. The ill-natured gossips along the route, in the tattling towns of Romaine, Breuil, Les Huppes and Francoy, declared that it was the shrewd tongue and red cheeks of the honest Perrinot that brought about this scandalous monopoly. On the other hand, many of the rich bourgeoisie in the châteaux of the district protested that they chose the conveyance of Jelybotte because it was more commodious and had springs, and that La Perrinot's vehicle was a torture. When the train stopping one day, La Perrinot spied Trajan she saluted him through the iron railings as one who meets an old friend.

"*A la bonne heure, Monsieur Traje*"—the name had always been too much for madame's tongue—"I expected you. I knew from Madame Arden that you were coming."

"A relic of former conquest?" asked Elliot as Trajan shook hands with his old friend.

"Yes indeed, the best of friends is Madame Perrinot. Let me present you."

Jelybotte of the rival diligence glowered at the young men. While the stuffy seats of La Perrinot were all taken, but one patron, an English governess, had the whole of the Jelybotte's capacious chariot to herself and her boxes. Madame Perrinot's joy was in such a triumph as this.

Victory to be complete, must taste, to the full, the humiliation of the vanquished. "Come, Jelybotte, give me a hand with this heavy baggage—you have the time," she added, maliciously glancing over her shoulder at the single pilgrim in the diligence. "Perhaps I shall ask you to take some of the boxes."

It often happened that madame's passengers were in a hurry for their baggage and could not wait until she returned to fetch it. On these rare occasions Jelybotte was patronized by the mistress of the diligence. He gave her a hand with an air of ludicrous resignation—but Trajan unconscious of the compact—seeing the crazy old vehicle would be over-laden, called out:

"You may leave our baggage for your next 'return.'

"*Très bien*," responded madame complacently, shooting a glance out of her wicked eye at her crest-fallen competitor.

"But it is not very well," roared that indignant victim of his rival's wiles, contrasting his empty coach with the shabby, but crowded, vehicle of his enemy. "You knew when you offered me the baggage, that it was only a ruse to get my help. You have served me that *coup* before, and I won't stand it. I shall take the load all the same and you shall pay me two francs."

La Perrinot loved combat, when she had a good audience. She turned from the diligence, where she had been preparing to mount, and confronted the glowering Jelybotte. The young men on the seat believed themselves to be thoroughly familiar with the French tongue. The dialogue that ensued undeceived them. But they understood enough to comprehend how it was that poor Perrinot gave way to his dame. I grieve to say that in the intoxication of her triumph, the rosy matron eschewed decorum as well as magnanimity; with her arms akimbo on her fat hips and prancing like a pantomimist, under the very nose of her exasperated rival, she favored the company with something more than plain-speaking, until in the heat of the discussion Jelybotte

incautiously alluded to domestic mysteries of the Perrinots, which elicited some revelations as to the Jelybotte household that Rousseau would have hesitated to embalm in the expansiveness of his confessions. The poor man put his hands to his ears, fled to his vehicle and drove off cracking his long whip furiously and lashing the horses to revenge his discomfiture. Madame mounted to her seat with unimpaired serenity, confiding to the young men, who sat outside with her, that the fellow was a worthless imbecile and she didn't see how decent people could consent to ride with him?

Elliot allowed that it was surprising in view of the disclosures madame had found it necessary to make.

"And those are not the worst do you know," she began vivaciously, plying her whip with energy, as if the wretch Jelybotte were there instead of the unoffending sorrel—"do you know"—

"Tell me," interposed Trajan to divert the honest woman from further scandal, which he knew from past experience would be carried to embarrasing details,"—"tell me, are the Comtesse Epinay and family at Crécy this season?"

"Ah—yes indeed, all the villas are full. There is an American prince in the Château Duclos, with an army of servants and I think a hundred horses."

"What is the name?" asked Trajan, more to keep the voluble lady from her favorite topic than to hear the name.

"Gobel—Govel—something like that—they have no end of millions—but doubtless, they are friends of monsieur, since you will be near neighbors."

The young man had no friends of that name, madame was pained to learn. She continued chattering incessantly, but as neither Trajan nor Elliot responded or encouraged further confidence she soon relapsed into silence and gave them an opportunity to study the incomparable landscape. The road, hard as rock and smooth as the surface of a stream, ran fenceless over low ridges, covered with lush

grasses and golden grain. Tall poplars set at regular distances made it a vast vernal lane, barred with shimmering sun rays. From the top of each ridge, villages nestling in fluffy verdure could be seen on either hand. Sometimes the mansard and gables of a château could be seen as the main road crossed the way to a seignorial domain. A canal for irrigation followed the road all the way, its waters as clear and limpid as a mountain stream; at each village this was crossed by venerable granite arches upon whose parapets dates as far back as 1640 were easily discernible.

"This is simply enchanting," exclaimed Elliot, as the diligence climbed to the last hill, from which Crécy could be seen embowered in foliage. "How can any one consent to live immured in cities with such divine pictures as this at hand?"

"Divine pictures don't fill the purse, nor keep the wheels of industry in movement," replied Trajan absently. "The delight of this place is that you never tire of its tranquil beauty—while I confess I do tire of mountains and the rugged wild woods. I could pass my life here in perfect contentment."

"I doubt it," said Elliot. "It is too perfect, you would soon sigh for something to readjust, something to change. All this seems so studiously graceful and exquisite that the very completeness of it would madden me. I like to have some handiwork in transforming nature to the physical or æsthetic wants of man."

"That is consistent with your theory of labor. But we shall be at "Les Charmettes" in a moment." The diligence left the high way and turned into a wide shaded carriage-road leading to a mass of light colored buildings, two stories high and crowned with a mansard and square dormer windows. As the diligence crunched around the circular graveled way the piazza of the château came into view. There was a group waiting, and when the young men were recognized, a lively waving of hats and handkerchiefs. La

Perrinot brought her horses around with an imposing sweep, and in a moment Edith was hanging on Elliot's neck. He kissed her fondly, and releasing her as Mrs. Arden came down the two steps to embrace him, he whispered: "Be very informal to Gray." She gave the young man her hand, confiding her delight, that he was to be one of the family of "Charmettes." There was a very cordial welcome for Trajan from the whole family, Bella coming last and remarking:

"I suppose, Mr. Gray, you know the château of Charmettes familiarly, as you must have been here often, while at Crécy?"

"Yes, the Dartleys are delightful people, and I was received very kindly."

"Edith and I have been on voyages of discovery in the house, and we are confident we have come upon a ghost; but we have waited for Elliot and you to confront the monster—are you up in spirits?" asked Bella.

"I sometimes raise them," replied Trajan smiling.

"From fancy, or the vasty deep?"

"No—from the blues."

"Mr. Gray, we have arranged your room next to my son's, and the young ladies have taken upon themselves the responsibility of choosing you a studio—in the roof—Bella will tell you the reason. I don't profess to understand so much about the external necessities of your art," said Mrs. Arden, as Pierre came to take up such luggage as the young men had brought from the station. The Charmettes differed slightly from most French châteaux of the seventeenth century. It had been almost entirely rebuilt within a hundred years. Instead of a quadrangle, the center was flanked by two wings, leaving a court in front and rear. The halls instead of dividing the buildings ran along the rear wall giving place for spacious chambers on every floor. The staircases were at each end of the wings instead of the middle, which was taken up by a great suit of drawing-

rooms. The large dining hall seating two score guests, and an almost equally spacious breakfast room, were in the south wing. The owner must have designed the Charmettes for good cheer, and plenty to share it, for fifty people could be very comfortably housed, while the cellars and kitchens afforded place for a year's provisions. The furnishing was of the white and gold, called Louis XIV., not unwelcome for summer, but fragile and chilling in winter. The rich tapestries and rugs covering the halls and chambers were brought by the Ardens, the French rarely using carpets or hangings in country houses in summer.

The young men found sumptuous quarters in the south wing, a dressing room alone separating them. A vast canopied bed, which Elliot likened to a funeral car, with the head scrupulously to the north, took up a large part of each room. As the irreverent Elliot was discoursing on the quaint objects, whose uses puzzled him, Edith's voice was heard in the hall.

"I came to tell you that you will only have time to dress. We dine at five and drive after dinner, unless Mr. Gray feels fatigued—and oh, Ned—who do you imagine has taken the neighboring château—Duclos? I know you could never guess."

"No, I don't think I could! Not our French cook?"

"Don't be absurd."

"Well, I don't see why he shouldn't, judging by the way he plundered us. Nothing would be more natural than his keeping near our mother, as he must know she is a gold mine under his hands."

"I won't have you tease mamma about that odious fellow. But aren't you curious to know our neighbors?"

"Yes, since I know it will please you, pussikin. Who in the name of all that's mysterious can it be?" asked Elliot as if his happiness were staked on the response.

"I shall not tell you, Mr. Indifference. I'm not going to be treated like a magpie chattering gossip, and I know that

you won't be able to give your mind to your neck-tie, wondering who it is."

"Who—the magpie is?" asked Elliot innocently. "Why that's Bella." But Edith wouldn't remain for further tormenting, and ran down stairs. When the young men reached the dining room Bella came up to Elliot laughing and demanding that he should do penance for abusing his sister.

"What, by calling my cousin Bella a magpie? It was only a guess, I assure you. I should have said owl if I had thought for a moment."

Bella opened her eyes. "This is too mysterious for me. Edith told me that she couldn't stimulate your curiosity about the occupant of the château yonder. My own impression is that you already knew, for in gossip men are far more curious than women."

"Yes," said Trajan, smiling at Bella, "you have divined his duplicity. Madame La Perrinot had already told us that it was an American and a millionaire. It is true she wasn't quite sure of the name, but that's a mere trifle compared with the fact that he's a millionaire. Millionaires, like kings, require no names to distinguish them from common folks."

Elliot burst into a hearty laugh. "'Pon my soul, Gray, you're a reckless satirist. The young lady before you will not be apt to forget your humor, and if madame our mamma were present, she would probably have something to say."

Trajan looked from Elliot to Bella and blushed. The fact that the Ardens and Briscoes might also be millionaires flashed upon him. Elliot hastened to turn the subject.

"Who is Gobel—I never heard of him. Do you know him or them, Edith?" That young lady justly outraged by her previous rebuff, declined to enlighten the scoffer, and it was not until seated at the table that Mrs. Arden said: "Apropos of the drive, Elliot, we shall be favored with a glimpse of the Grovels, who have taken the Duclos château."

"The Grovels!" gasped Elliot. "You don't mean it, mother?"

"Why not? They left their cards yesterday, and you must call in due time."

"If the Grovels ever find my card in their tray they'll have to steal it. I don't want to know such people!"

"But as head of the family, I don't see how you can very well escape it," replied Mrs. Arden. "Of course they will know you are here—in fact young Mr. Grovel asked me if the 'men folks' were coming out."

"And what do you suppose he proposed to Bella?" cried Edith, looking at Elliot to avoid Bella's uneasy and reproachful glance. "He absolutely proffered her the use of one of his Mexican ponies to skirmish round the 'diggins' as he called the country."

Bella joined the burst of laughter, though she blushed, I'm sure I don't know why, for ten minutes afterward.

"By George! Gray—let's cultivate the Grovels and see the wonderful horses. We could stand the men for the sake of those remarkable beasts. If their tricks are as odd as their master's, they must be well worth acquaintance. Aunt Briscoe, you don't mean to say that you encouraged the Grovel!"

Aunt Briscoe's comments on character were always encouraged by the younger members of the family. She had some tricks of expression that convulsed Elliot with merriment. She was, however, very chary of her judgments before strangers, and it was not for some time that Trajan realized the shrewd profundity of this observant *fainéante*. Hence, when this young man asked his aunt's appreciation of the Grovel she knew that he was bent upon exploiting her credulity, and she gave a guarded response.

"I found the young man sensible. His manners don't differ much from those of the usual underbred people of his class, but considering his chances he has made very good use of them. I have seen people enjoying more advantages

who make a much poorer figure in company," she said with placid decision.

Every body laughed, and Elliot turned discomfited to his cousin, asking insinuatingly whether that young lady expected a disciple in the Grovel.

"I fancy, rather, that he will be an evangel in this wilderness. He gave himself a most exemplary character. He confided to us that he never 'indulged in spirits,' and the habit of this country in substituting wine for water, he thought an iniquity. His mother, dwelling upon 'Lafayette's' virtues—he drops the Washington in France—remarked that he would be a perfect young man if he didn't eat so much tobacco."

"Eat tobacco?" exclaimed Elliot.

"He chews tobacco, it seems, and his mother laments that nothing can break the odious habit, which he learned in his ranching days in Montana."

"I believe he was trying to ingratiate himself with your aunt," said Mrs. Arden. "He dwelt with great fervor on his unshakable resolution to remain a 'teetotaler.'"

Mrs. Briscoe denied that this had captivated her, but Elliot declared that he was going straightway to emulate the Grovel—by doing all his wine-bibbing in the secrecy of his own chamber.

Dinner over, the young people mounted their horses, while Mrs. Arden and her sister jogged after them in a light victoria. Trajan rode with Edith, and Elliot with Bella. But as the roads were unknown to the latter couple, the party were for the most of the time four abreast, and the artist pointed out the ways leading to such scenic wonders as were to be visited in turn. It was dusk as they turned back. The road homeward led them past the village of Férrières, and the sumptuous château of the Rothschilds, which in the dim twilight seemed, at first sight, a Tuileries transplanted to this vernal spot. As the party came to the high golden-barred gates, an equipage was just on the point of driving off.

"There are the Grovels," said Edith, "I recognize the voice of Washington Lafayette. I wonder if he knows the Baron?"

"It is not necessary to know the Baron or his family to enter the château," rejoined Trajan. "Cards of admission can be obtained by writing to the major-domo. The château is the most famous show-house in Europe, and the first day you have leisure you could not do better than induce the family to come over and examine the treasures of *bric-à-brac* and household adornment lavished on the six score or more apartments of this colossal pile."

"Which of the Rothschilds lives here?" asked Edith, looking at the vast front, with the colonnades of marble shining in the moonlight.

"Baron Alphonse. It was here the Emperor and Empress were entertained a year or so ago—when the service—solid gold—was melted down immediately after the event, that no common lips might ever desecrate what majesty had touched. The way from here to Paris, twenty-seven miles, was lighted with gas; the trees were hung with Venetian lamps. The court came out by the road, in carriages furnished by Rothschild, to imitate the pageantry of Louis XIV., as recorded in Watteau's canvases. The château itself is much more sumptuous than the Tuileries, as you shall see when we go through."

"I am surprised that such treasures are safe in a lonely country place like this," said Elliot. "An enterprising band of the rogues that rob our banks at home, would make short work of so tempting a place."

"It's not as easy a thing to do as you fancy," said Trajan. "The château is guarded by an army of servants—at least two hundred, counting the stables. Then the village, connected by a subterranean way, is really but a dependence of the estate. A signal from the housekeeper would bring five hundred men in a few minutes. Wait until you have seen the interior and you will see how well every thing is guarded."

The return to Crécy was under the moonlight, and it was after ten when the horses were sent away. Long after midnight, the nightingales in the neighboring lindens were evidently astounded by lights high up in the mansard of the château, where the two friends were putting the studio in order for the anticipated work of the summer. Many a time afterward the comrades recalled these ideal nights, when, after the pleasures and cares of the day, they came together in kind effusiveness on their mutual ground of endeavor. It would be profitable as a diagnosis of the swift change going on in Trajan, to follow the current of the young men's talk, but as results will illustrate the lad's adaptation to his new surroundings, the ingenious combats of the two may be supposed. At an age when ideas are plenty, the two were at no loss for themes of infinite dilatation. The groves of the Academy were not more fertile in profoundly metaphysical theses.

The nightingale had ceased to sing when the friends descended to their rooms, and the white roofs of Crécy were bathed in floods of hazy moonlight. The morning chorus had begun in the trees when Trajan arose from the window and retired to tranquil dreams under the great canopy. When he opened his eyes late in the morning a servant was holding the curtains, and his coffee and rolls were on the little table by the bed. Elliot's voice sounded from the next room caroling a gay French air. At twelve o'clock the household gathered in the breakfast room, and thereafter each member was left to his or her own devices. The young ladies were going to the station to meet expected guests, but Trajan, declaring that he must begin the régime properly, declined Elliot's invitation to accompany them, and betook himself to the *atelier*, where the young people threatened an invasion in force so soon as the new comers were bestowed in their rooms. The *atelier* commanded a sweep of the country, and Trajan standing at the window saw the cavalcade moving through the grounds and followed it with his eyes until the

poplars closed it from his sight. The servants had opened the boxes, and he occupied himself in adjusting the tapestries, armor and easels. When he had ended his work the apartment was an ideal studio, and though it lacked a skylight, the large dormer windows on two sides gave abundance of light. He fell to sketching valorously. The outlines were not, however, his favorite landscape. It was a girlish head with a bewitching dimpled chin and oval face, which without curls and the delicacy of the lines, might have been a study of Elliot. Why did he cover the sheet guiltily, an hour later, as he heard footsteps approaching the door?

"Presto, what a wizard you are, Gray! The place has a new physiognomy. It's almost as picturesque as your Dragon retreat," exclaimed Elliot, who entered, followed by Bella and Edith.

These charming beings were delighted with the shrine art had fashioned itself. Trajan pointed out the niches in which the devotees were to worship, and said with gravity:

"But here every thing is to be solemn and orderly. You are not to joke and talk, as I am given to understand is the habit of young ladies. The prize I offer the best worker is a portrait of the prodigy who turns out the most apt."

"In that event, you may just as well begin on Bella's at once, because she is the only Arden that has what the French call 'suite' in her undertakings. I'll lay you ten to one, Gray, that she beats all in portraits within three months," said Elliot, jocularly.

"Painting, unlike poetry or any other art, doesn't come by assiduity. It is made up of faith and abnegation. I doubt very much Miss Bella's constancy, after she has seen the beauties that surround Crécy. She will feel as the young poet does who reads Shakespeare and then strives to put his infantile language into shape."

"But let us hope that Bella may prove an exception, for there's nothing infantile about her fancies," said Edith, laughing.

"Pray let me answer for myself, Busybodies. I shall be quite content if I can ever draw passably. As for the mystery of color, I shall no more think of mastering that than I should think of enjoying the beauties of Crécy by being able to resolve them into their original elements. There'll be no Rosa Bonheur nor Ary Scheffer in this generation of the Ardens."

"Who knows? I feel equal to a conquest," cried Edith, suspending her pencil reflectively. "See how well I've caught those eyes," and she poised her head critically as she surveyed a large-eyed peasant with his scythe poised above his head and an expression so lugubrious that it might be suspected that he was in doubt whether the utensil were an implement of toil or an improvised gibbet.

"Yes, Edith, I have remarked that you catch the eyes, but don't be too confident; art, like love, requires to go deeper," and Bella gave the unwary neophyte a strange look of mingled mischief and mirth.

"You're always going deep into things, Bella, and the worst is, one can't follow you. What has love or depth got to do with a mill landscape, and peasant, and red-haired girl?"

"That depends on a good deal. If the peasant is young, unmarried and sentimental, the heart should be the chief study, especially if the red-haired girl is made to look propitious," volunteered Elliot in an ex-cathedra tone, from which a full knowledge of art and heart might be inferred. Bella laughed softly and stole a glance at Trajan, absorbed in a sheet almost entirely invisible under carelessly arranged cards.

"We must inaugurate our régime by promptitude, ladies and gentlemen, and I warn you that the dinner hour is near, and though art is long and life short, it can't be stretched by fostering," and the vandal Elliot began to gather together Bella's materials. There was an outcry from both the amateurs, but he was inexorable.

CHAPTER XVI.

THEO. RESUMES THE COMEDY.

"THE first state dinner at Les Charmettes is to be an affair," said Elliot, distracting the artists from their work as the signals of the banquet came from an emissary of the butler. "As host I will take the part of chorus and paint the character of the personages for your better understanding of the drama.

"First in the list, Kate McNair, a distant relation of Bella's father's family, a perfect trump of an old girl. Devoted to match-making and the kirk. She'll have you married before you mix your second pot of colors unless you look sharp. She hates a Catholic as rats hate terriers or philosophers science! She has been in her forty-first year ever since I've known a beard's adversity—a razor. She wears gowns such as Johnson must have had in his eye on his jaunt to the Hebrides. She has a wit like a beggar's first-born at breast, nipping and eager. She speaks the English tongue with a cooing Scotch grace, which I think she retains as a sign that the Scot has not surrendered every thing to the Sassenach, that Bruce died for and Sir Walter wrote to revive; she will learn every love affair recorded in the remotest corner of your inconstant heart before she has known you a week. As is your knowledge of the kirk and the Covenanters, so will her love be to you; if you are ignorant of a single article of the creed the Murrayites and the Campbells contended for, she will feed you on the porridge of disdain, and no genuflexions of the children of the world will make her abide you. The Ardens she dimly associates with those that were forgotten when the prophet went up in fire. Bella, here, as being gifted with some of her own oat-fed wit, she regards as the Zenobia of girls."

"You impudent and disrespectful mischief-maker, how

dare you!" cries Bella. "Mr. Gray, our relation is no more like the picture this insolent maligner of his kith paints, than—than a ——"

"Wasp to a humming-bird?"

"Than a March wind to a June breeze—or vinegar to acid of lemon—that's better, Bella, accept the amendment. Well, she's weak when she comes to Bella, as I was remarking in this pre-raphaelite sketch. She domineers over my poor mother, wheedles Aunt Briscoe, and tolerates Edith, because she, the poor child, swallows the Covenanters, Knox and all, with trusting confidence, as children take nauseous doses to get better terms for the next punishable prank."

"I won't have Kate talked about in this way," remonstrated Edith. "She's an angel, a ——"

"Yes, she's the descendant of the angel the prophet wrestled with, and inherits all the belligerence and some of the prowess of her ancestor. She's like the bent hand on the face of the clock, always catching the minute hand, just to show that no one can pass her in the duty of the hour. She will devise a sermon at the least sinful of your suggestions. If you were a woman, she would make the pains of Loyola a pastime, compared with your penance for every new gown or casual furbelow you might thoughtlessly assume to adorn your person. She's like the Puritan Macaulay describes, who didn't mind the suffering of the bear in baiting, but objected to the pleasure the sinful derived in looking on. She has increased the Arden bank account by the simplicity to which she has reduced our wardrobe, for to have a second suit I am obliged to keep chambers out of her inquisitorial reach. In the love of the Lord she will get up a war in ten minutes that will split families into undying feuds. Music is an abhorrence to her, and there is no work of art that propitiates her, outside of a lurid canvas representing John Knox impolitely pointing a finger of admonition at the astonished Queen of Scots,

whose ruff expresses the horror the beautiful face was unequal to. She ——"

"I won't stand such calumny; Mr. Gray, the lady this unworthy relative distorts in this outrageous fashion is the soul of kindness and adores that worthless scamp; has petted and spoiled him all his life, and after John Knox, thinks him the most perfect of mankind. She is a trifle vigorous in speech, and dreadfully sharp in seizing the little points one leaves undefended in the ardor of conversation. Elliot's description suits her as the likening of a chestnut burr to a peach," and Bella flung a glance of disdain at the wanton destroyer of character.

"But in either aspect, I own to considerable dread of encountering a personage so formidable," said Trajan.

"Have no fear, Mr. Gray, Kate is the sweetest and best of dear old souls," and Edith looked at him with naïve conviction.

"Bear in mind, Gray, when the evil time comes, I have done my duty as man, friend, and host. I have warned you of the perils of Kate's acquaintance; if you let the partiality of these young women lull you, there will come a time of regret."

"I will at once begin a studious siege of Scottish history to make myself tolerable to this formidable personage."

"Well, let me go on in my part of the chorus and acquaint you with the personages of these sylvan revels. I'll leave the females to Bella's descriptive genius and set forth the men. First, my comrade in the law school, a roaring socialist, with a squint at communism as oblique as your own," continued Elliot, with affable toleration of the two heretics. "The most amazing young inconsequent in the world, Réné Belcour, my crony in the law school, a charming fellow, and like yourself a restless revolutionaire, in love with every pretty girl he sees, so be on your guard, young women. Alfred Claridge, correspondent of the *London Parthenon*, making notes for essays and books. Herbert Hec-

tor, a Harvard man, graduate in law, now switched into literature, occasional correspondent of the *Boston Pantarch*, somewhat conceited and *blasé*, talks like Plato and acts like a child of nature—that is, holds the world as indisputably his own by acquired right."

"An agreeable personage, truly," said Trajan in dismay.

"Oh, he's not so disagreeable as Elliot paints him," interrupted Bella, working away in her niche. "He's what we call bumptious, but very good-natured. My mother admires him immensely and I think it is the knowledge of that that gives our Alcibiades his obliquity of vision in striking his portrait."

"Very well, last touch to Hector—adored by the descendant of the Ardens of Warwick," continued Elliot incorrigibly. "The next figure, ladies and gentlemen, is the renowned Vicomte de Bellechasse—descendant and heir-apparent of the dukedom of Contre-Cœur—the most dashing, gorgeous, impressible young nobleman, untrue to divine right and lost in the fleshpots of the usurping empire. I have left the ladies for the last tableau, and as Bella prefers her brush I will immortalize these: In order of age, Mrs. Drayton, wife of the late General Drayton, of Lexington, Kentucky. Blue with the blood that percolated through ever so many aristocratic veins, from Pocahontas to Custis-Lee. Daughter, Mrs. Rossitor, wife of late Governor Rossitor, of Virginia, engaged in finding a suitable husband for the Miss Phœbe Rossitor, fascinating witch who doesn't take to books, but dotes on young men, croquet, dancing, boating, and other agreeable pastimes that require the masculine presence to make endurable."

"You insufferable egotist and gossip, how can you talk so of a young lady," cried Bella indignantly. "Fancy, Edith, that's the fashion we are talked of by these odious young men whom we endure out of politeness. I won't listen to such malignant aspersions upon our sex," she added, putting her hands to her pretty ears.

"I think Elliot has sketched his persons pretty truly so far," said Edith, composedly, drawing an eccentric curve on her paper, under Trajan's guidance.

"Master Tom Rossitor is the last figure in this interesting group. Troublesome young cub, sixteen or thereabout; ideal of the female Rossitors and thorn in the flesh of Miss Phœbe. Now, Gray, you are *au fait* with the *dramatis personæ*."

"But remember, Mr. Gray," Edith interposed, "you are to be enchanted with the dear old Kate, that is if you're not awed," added the little maiden, "for Kate doesn't approve of every body."

"Hello, where are you?" exclaimed a well known voice in the hall, "where's this Cave of Calypso, dedicated to the Graces?" and Philip appeared in the doorway. "'Pon my word, Gray, you have the gifts of Aladdin; the place is as like your Rue de Dragon parlor, as if it were modeled on it."

"I brought the draperies and odds and ends to give the room a work-like look," said Trajan. "The imagination needs a good deal of help in painting, and this rubbish suggests fancies that the bare walls would not."

"And you have laid the wand upon these young people and got them all at work—wonderful—most wonderful! May we look for a *chef d'œuvre* from you in the next *salon*, Edith? What is to be the *genre* of your masterpiece, Bella?" asked Philip, taking a chair and seating himself by the table of that absorbed devotee.

"You're not to be a tease here, sir; we shall insist on Mr. Gray's forbidding you the *atelier* unless you promise silence and respect," said Bella, continuing resolutely with her work.

"An entirely proper sentiment, Miss Bella, and I promise to carry it out," said Trajan. "The skeptical spirit has no home here. Mr. Kent must leave his incredulity behind when he enters here."

"Incredulous!" cried Philip. "I'm any thing but that.

Why, I could almost believe in my own power to take in the noble spirit of art in such company."

A servant appeared at this moment and announced that madame proposed a reunion on the lawn.

"I suppose we must go," said Edith ruefully, "I could have spent the whole afternoon here. I'm doing beautifully, am I not, Mr. Gray?"

"It's too early to commend, wait until you have gone through a few ordeals," said the master, consciously.

"When you want commendation come to me, young ladies," said Philip, humorously. "I will not stint praise—there's no jealousy about me."

On the lawn all the newcomers were disposed in easy attitudes, some of the gentlemen in hammocks, and the ladies under the foliage plying embroidery needles and what not. Trajan was presented to the group and sat down beside Kate, that paragon of all the impossible contradictions Elliot had sketched with free hand. Mrs. Rossitor, very stout and very red in the face, was engaging the vicomte in a lurid narrative of the horrors her family had suffered during the "vile abolition war," while the young vicomte twirled his mustaches and sneakingly followed the movements of Miss Phœbe, a slim young girl with a pale, delicate face, engaged in knocking croquet balls with master Tom. Mrs. Drayton, the relict of the Kentucky general, was not present, Mrs. Arden explained, as the drive from the station had fatigued her. Edith proposed a game of croquet, and to make the sides complete Mrs. Arden joined as partner to master Tom. Elliot declined to engage, declaring that he would discuss politics with Mrs. Rossitor. Trajan, protesting his awkwardness, consented to take a mallet as Edith's partner. Miss McNair warned the vicomte, her partner, that she insisted on his giving his whole mind to the game, as she would as soon lose a tooth as a wicket.

"Then you may as well order a set of teeth, mademoiselle, for I never was known to hit a ball or pass a wicket."

"Never mind, keep your eye on me and do as I tell you, and we shall beat them," said the spinster determinedly. I've carried worse players than you through before now," she added with reassuring blandness.

The rest laughed, for every one knew that Kate McNair never gave in defeated while brow-beating was left as a resource.

Victory declared for Master Tom, Mrs. Arden, Hector and Bella, though Kate protested that there was scandalous cheating. Trajan, Edith, Hector and Claridge dropped out of the second game, and Kate re-established her prowess, carrying the astonished vicomte through a dozen arches and crippling her antagonist by "canons," fixed shots, and all manner of artifices known only to the amateurs of this fascinating diversion. The grounds were ringing with the well-merited plaudits of the determined spinster's prowess, when an open Victoria drove up the lawn road. Jules Carnot was driving and Theo sat beside him. She threw kisses to the ladies and leaped out as the horse stopped.

"I told Jules we should get the reputation of a bad penny," laughed Theo as Mrs. Arden came forward to welcome her. "We've accepted an invitation to spend a month with the Grovels, your neighbors. I ran over to announce the news myself."

Then, knowing every body, the charming Theo had something to say to each.

"I am very glad to know you are near us," said Mrs. Arden heartily, "we had intended to send you an invitation to visit us so soon as we became more settled, and as it is we shall insist on your giving us a week, at least."

"Have you just left Paris?" said Elliot, as Jules, relinquishing the reins to the groom, came up.

"Yes, we left this morning at eight o'clock."

"What is the prospect, war or peace?"

"About even. The Prussians are forcing the Emperor's hand, and the rumor of the Hohenzollern candidacy has

driven the Bourse into a panic. If that turns out to be a real move on the chess board, the Emperor will be forced in spite of himself to declare war. Agents have been sent to Austria, Italy, Bavaria and Wurtemburg, offering the aid of France in re-establishing the status of affairs before Sadowa, but no one in Paris hopes much from these negotiations. My own opinion is that war is inevitable. The eminent Bonapartists have been making heavy transfers to London and New York."

Herbert Hector spoke in his character of universal diplomate:

"I wrote to my paper a week ago that war was inevitable, and I give the Germans three months to get into Paris"

"As prisoners of war, you mean," said the Vicomte de Bellechasse, with angry incredulity.

"I wish I could think so," said the American gravely. "I have just come from Germany. The country is one vast camp. The ardor for war something stupefying. Even were Bismarck disposed to placate the Emperor, the German military party would not consent. They know to a musket what force the French can put in the field, and it is the common opinion in Berlin that their army will be before Paris within twenty days after war is declared, and I am forced to say that I think they are right."

"Come, gentlemen, don't let us have any war here until it comes. This is the temple of peace, and dinner will be ready before we can dress. Disperse to your tents and be ready for the bell," said Mrs. Arden, as the ladies arose and trooped toward the house. Theo and Jules were induced to remain on condition that a messenger should be sent to the Grovels announcing the fact. Trajan, meanwhile, had wandered off in the park to show Edith the stream that curled and bubbled through the slopes back of the château. The small Tom set out after them, but, absorbed in a butterfly chase, soon fell out of sight.

"An artist's life must be very delightful," said Edith, as

Trajan strode onward through familiar paths, pointing out the beauties of rock and rivulet hidden under masses of clustering vines and trees, whose gnarled roots testified an ancient lineage.

"Why delightful?" asked Trajan absently.

"Well, I should imagine that looking at natural objects with the purpose of seeing their beauty in relation to each other, an artist's mind would come to be a reservoir for the reflection of the beautiful in nature alone."

"I'm afraid the artist would be obliged to be young and enthusiastic as you, to live in that sort of an atmosphere. Art is like every thing else that ministers to life, sometimes the reflex of real beauty of soul, sometimes the result only of industry. Very good paintings are produced by sordid, soulless beggars, who would revolt you in ten minutes. The truest exponents of nature sometimes remain unknown and unappreciated until their dying day, as Corot, for example, who painted yonder in the woods of Barbison, unable to pay for his two meals a day and fuel."

"That will not be your reward, Mr. Gray, for Elliot says you have real genius, and," added the little maiden impulsively, "he is an excellent judge. He selected every object of art and all the paintings for us in Paris and New York."

Then, bethinking herself, she blushed in delicious confusion, and Trajan suddenly felt something in his throat that impeded speech.

"Your brother is a singularly well informed man for his years, but I fear he could hardly force the world to share his opinions of my powers—at least just yet. You know," he added, "the test of fine work is not the appreciation of a few. It is the instant recognition of the many that marks a real touch of nature."

"But didn't you just say yourself, Mr. Gray, that Corot produced his best works and for years no one found out how good they were?"

"True, but the quality of his works gave them universal

favor, so soon as they became known. Then, too, Corot did in painting what Keats and Coleridge did in poetry; he went back to the primal truths of art, and the world had been so long befogged with vanities and foolishness that they did not recognize nature when it was set before them. There has been only one Corot in this century, as there was but one Keats and one Coleridge."

"I don't quite understand it all, I'm sure," said Edith reflectively. "Painting is a great mystery to me, as I fancy it is to most people, and perhaps when I have learned some of its practice and heard you and Elliot discuss it fully, I may understand it better. Do you know, I think it is dinner time. Angels of grace!" as she looked at the tiny watch at her girdle, "ten minutes to five—we shall be late, and the house full of strangers."

"You speak as if some penance would be put upon you. I don't imagine your mother a tyrant to make you tremble," said Trajan quite composedly.

"It's not mamma—but the proprieties—which, of course, being a lawless artist you ignore—but really we must hasten."

"Don't be uneasy—I am not unmindful of the proprieties and I know a path which will take us to the rear entrance of the château in five minutes, if you don't mind my lifting you across the brook, which becomes noisy and broad on the route."

No, Edith did not mind, and twice the light girlish figure was lifted carefully, with much laughing, and in five minutes the vagrants were in the hall.

"I shall have time to brush my hair at all events," said Edith smiling, and Trajan wanted to say that if she were wise she would never touch those golden tresses, but let them fall over the clear temples in the delicious confusion of the moment. He said nothing, however, but skipped lightly up to his room. Elliot was just coming out:

"Hello! I couldn't imagine what had become of you."

"Your sister and I wanted to see the brook spring and we went off to the hill-side with young Thomas Rossitor."

Hardly waiting for Trajan to finish, Elliot interrupted. —"The Carnots came over from the Grovels just before the bell rang, and they are going to remain for dinner."

"Who?" said Trajan hoarsely, steadying himself by the post of the canopy where he was in the act of hanging his coat.

"Theo and Jules Carnot; you have met them?"

Trajan had turned from the eyes of the other while this was spoken, and nodded. Elliot continued, "Dinner is announced, you will be late."

"Make my excuses to your mother, please, and say that I have a bad turn that will make it impossible for me to sit at the table."

"Good Heavens, Gray! what do you mean?" exclaimed Elliot, his face suddenly clouded, "are you ill? Have you over-fatigued yourself? You are deadly white. Lie down."

"No—no—it's nothing serious, I assure you, and you will be doing me a great kindness if you will make my excuses to your mother quietly. Now go—I beg as a favor—so that your tardiness may not be remarked."

"I'm sure I don't understand you at all, Gray."

"You will understand it all later; when I see you after dinner I will explain—go for Heaven's sake."

Elliot quit the room uneasy and puzzled. It never occurred to him to connect Trajan's refusal to go down with the presence of the Carnots. He whispered Trajan's excuses to his mother, who was alarmed for the young man's health and rang at once for a servant to attend him. When the party was seated, Theo's observant eye remarked the servant removing the empty chair and extra plate from Edith's side. She said nothing, but she was bent on penetrating the mystery. It was a mystery only for a moment, and she had no occasion to call in her fine powers to discover its mean-

ing. "Where is Mr. Gray?" asked Bella as Elliot took his place at the foot of the table near her.

Edith looked up as Elliot bent over to his cousin and said in a low tone:

"He is feeling unwell, and asks to be excused from dinner."

"Is Gray with you?" asked Jules, further up the table, catching Bella's question.

"Yes," said Elliot. "He is acquainted about here, and is come down to sketch for the summer."

Theo's curiosity was satisfied. She knew as well as if she had been present, the cause of Trajan's illness and the removal of the superfluous chair.

"Where has Mr. Gray established his studio?" she asked Bella politely.

"In the mansard of the south wing of the château—a charming apartment."

"Ah! you really must take us up there after dinner," says the ingenuous lover of the fine arts. "I dote on *ateliers*—one learns so much of the a b c of art among the painter's properties!"

The dinner passed off with great gayety. Mrs. General Drayton was arrayed in the grandeur, as she confided to her neighbor the publicist Hector, that had been admired in the court receptions, where five kings were in the room with the emperor. Mrs. General was on the books of time venturesomely near fourscore. But in the tablets of fashion she was not more than fifty. Her wrinkled cheeks were of a gentle vermilion hue, that did credit to her French maid Jeannette. Her venerable hair was coifed in waves *à l'Impératrice*, and her skinny old hands glistened with innumerable jewels of every conceivable color and degree of costliness. Her figure was arrayed in a delicate mauve silk, subdued under undulating rolls of priceless lace. Mrs. General, mother of a daughter of forty-nine or fifty, was the sprightliest coquette in the room and absolutely made

the thin figure and sparse locks of Kate McNair elderly by comparison. Her conversation was as juvenile as her make-up, and Mrs. Arden was forced to drown some of her wicked prattle in a clatter of the dishes to keep the venerable cynic's worldliness from the ears of her darlings.

The Vicomte Bellechasse was effusively gallant to the frisky octogenarian, and as she understood some of the French tongue and pretended to understand all, the young man gave loose rein to the charming habit of his nation in regaling this simple old flirt with the broadest gossip of the clubs and the court. The young men in his vicinity enjoyed the conversation immensely, and the Ardens, who were considerably removed, were mystified by the hilarity. Every one shared the snatches of scandal that sometimes reached the whole table in a lull of quieter talk, save Elliot and his sister. The latter was very pensive, and her lack of appetite so disturbed the watchful Kate that she asked her if she was ailing. No, Edith said, quite as if she were guilty of some sinful deception, she was only a trifle fatigued. She had been taking a long walk. Theo's parti-colored eyes glistened agreeably as she asked in a dulcet tone:

"Ah! Edith, have you discovered the delights of Crécy? The walks about the château and the neighboring glen are the joy of the artists. Mr. Gray used to have a favorite haunt in the Ravine de Revêche, as it is called. You must get him to show it to you."

Edith, as we have learned, was not fond of her radiant countrywoman, and this haphazard shot, which with a woman's instinct the young girl knew to be malicious, did not serve to lessen her antipathy to the conquering Theo.

When the dinner was over the ladies insisted on visiting the studio, and, as they set out, Elliot hastened to Trajan's room. A tray with *consommé* and wine stood on his table untasted, but the young man was nowhere to be seen. Elliot sat down and waited a few minutes, impatiently, then bethought him that the delinquent had gone to the studio,

and he hastened eagerly thither. Trajan, so soon as Elliot left him, had indeed gone to the studio. It was a familiar place, even though new, for his treasures and easel made it his home. He sat down at the window looking out over the trees where he had just walked, the dim shape of a new hope vaguely dawning upon his inward vision. He was wholly unconscious of its significance or reality; but he felt as one feels who has been tempest-tossed, despairing of rescue, and sees a far-distant sail on the horizon. He got up, and uncovering the sheets that lay on the tablets of his easel, gazed on the head he had outlined in the morning. A light footstep in the door startled him; looking up, Edith, with her lips parted and eyes wide open, stood regarding him, speechless!

"You gave me such a fright!" she exclaimed. "We thought you were ill and in your room, and every body is coming to see the studio. I hope you are feeling better. You are—are you not?"

"Oh, it was a mere passing qualm, and I got over it directly," said Trajan, fumbling with the drawings, and slipping the one he had been contemplating into the middle of the pile.

"Mr. Gray is here to receive us himself," said Edith, as the party entered. "Miss Carnot, you know Mr. Gray, I believe?" Edith asked, as Theo came forward with tranquil self-possession.

"Oh yes, Mr. Gray and I are very old and very dear friends. I'm so delighted to find you here, Mr. Gray," she said, giving the young man a hand as composedly as if it had never been pressed and kissed by the man before her.

"Only wise people enjoy such simple delights, Miss Carnot. It is your favorite poet, Mrs. Browning, who preaches that happy life means prudent compromise; we are wiser than that, and take our delights in following our own ways and believing in our own maxims," answered Trajan, with just a vibration of trembling in the tone, which was not lost upon Edith any more than it was upon Theo.

At this juncture Elliot pushed through the group entering the room first, and seeing Trajan, said:

"You have given me a pretty chase. I expected to find you in bed, and here you are, and evidently have been at work."

"You must not be surprised at Mr. Gray's freaks, Mr. Arden. When he declines dining, you may be sure he has a good reason. The goddess who chooses awkward moments for her best hints, may seize upon the dinner hour as well as another, and when that happens convention must give way to inspiration," murmured Theo, watching her victim out of the corner of her eye, while ostensibly studying the cardboard on the easel.

Trajan bit his lip. Was there ever, he thought, a match for this wicked, undaunted little schemer? She flaunted before him with the same malign sprightliness that had captivated him when they first met, and seemed as unconscious of the intervening abyss of falsehood and dishonor—her own avowals, as well as what she had not avowed—as if she were as pure and true as the most unspotted and sinless in the vineyard. He had shrunk chivalrously from meeting her, seeking to shield her from the embarrassment he supposed she must feel. Though the love he had kept lighted as a sacred fire in his heart had long ago burned out, and the very ashes of it had been purified out of him, he would have fled from Les Charmettes rather than subject her to the humiliation of appearing before him. But he knew that her coming was a bravado, and her effrontery absolved him from all further obligation. He would show her that even her tough conscience could be touched, and that she should not escape scathless, if the irony she dealt to others had any power of penetrating her own callous heart. I am humiliated to own that Theo, the penetrating, the sagacious, the Machiavellian, had amazingly miscalculated in this intrepid maneuver. She had no sooner heard of Trajan's presence in the château on the removal of the plate, than she made up her mind that

fear of her prowess had kept her former lover in his room, and she resolved to appear before him and re-subjugate him as she had conquered others. Her career had been one of such unbroken conquest that, like Napoleon before Leipsic, she would be content with nothing but the *status quo ante bellum*, and like the imperial warrior after the disastrous repulse at Leipsic she did not give in defeated. She was more than ever bent upon resuming her sway over the infatuated adversary who foolishly imagined he could escape her yoke.

"Miss Briscoe, you must get Mr. Gray to paint your portrait. What couldn't his clever pencil do with such a head as yours, when he made mine the wonder of Paris for a whole season. You must really come to the Rue Galilée to see it. The best judges in Paris pronounce it a *chef d'œuvre*."

"Perhaps, Theo," suggested Jules, "it was the necessity of eking out fact by imagination that gave Gray an advantage in painting you. In the case of Miss Briscoe it would be just the other way; the fact surpassing imagination might result in a poor picture."

"It's often from the hand of a friend that we receive the severest blows, Miss Carnot," said Trajan, disingenuously, "and the nearer the friend the more vital the blow, though I know none of us will subscribe to your brother's ungallant version of the story."

"Brothers and husbands are licensed revilers of women, and as for Jules, he is prone to believe other people's sisters more perfect than his own," laughed Theo, tacitly admitting defeat, which, as she was unaccustomed to it, did not sit well upon her charming face or go well with her winning manner.

Mrs. Arden reminded the company that the horses were waiting and the sunlight waning. Trajan had forgotten all about his illness and was ready with the rest when the cavalcade set out. It was an imposing train, as they cantered through the leafy park in irregular groups, Mrs. Arden with the elder ladies in a landau, and the younger people in the

saddle. The vicomte gallantly lingered with the octogenarian, as she held her voluminous train on the porch, declining to go out and risk the dew. Elliot succeeded in prevailing upon Theo to join the train. Jules was dismissed with the victoria, and she rode off in high spirits. She sat well, as she did every thing, and never was gayer or more seductive. Bella, riding with Hector, did not seem lost in the vivacious comments of that self-satisfied publicist. She had perpetual difficulty with her stirrups, and finally dismounted to readjust them. Singularly enough, it was just as Elliot and Theo rode up, talking in almost confidential tones, that the obstinate straps were adjusted to the young lady's liking. Thereafter she made a pretext of admiring scenic bits in detail to keep the horses in a walk, and thus, by a singular chance, just behind her cousin and his *vis-a-vis*. The complacent prattle of the publicist, as he recounted his exploits in the wars, to his no small chagrin, elicited but fragmentary responses from the abstracted Bella, who was wont to lead conversation in whatever company she found herself. Trajan, riding with Miss Phœbe, was far in advance. As the twilight deepened, Hector not being familiar with the road, Bella suggested returning, and the two turned back, Hector relapsing into silence, smitten with a sudden consciousness that his companion was not properly appreciative of his distinction as the only Boston journalist maintained in the capital of civilization to paint the manners and moralize on the virtues and vices of the French people. They had ridden but a short distance when they overtook the carriage, where Mrs. Rossitor was expatiating on the wickedness of French society, and explaining how she watched over those spotless cherubs, "my Phœbe and my Tommy." The horses walking behind the carriage, Bella listened to the fond mother, and shook with laughter as Kate McNair interpolated an occasional sarcasm, of which the honest matron was cheerfully unconscious.

"Which of the wanderers is that behind?" calls out Mrs.

Arden, forced to make a diversion to save herself from an unseemly disturbance of this maternal complacency.

"It is Mr. Hector and I, Aunt Cordelia," replies Bella demurely. "My stirrup plagued me, and as I didn't know the roads well I thought it prudent to return, and have deprived poor Mr. Hector of the pleasure of the night ride."

Mr. Hector protested that he was enchanted to return. Would Miss Briscoe join him in a game of chess?

"Why not be more sociable and make it cards?" says the plain spoken Kate, not relishing the nature of the continued story of the young Rossitors.

They found the octogenarian deep in casino, with the maid, on entering the *salon*, and were rewarded with fervent ejaculations of welcome by that venerable gamester, who immediately proposed whist, the party being made up greatly to Bella's satisfaction without her, Mrs. Briscoe and Kate joining against the journalist and the veteran.

"Aunty, I'm provoked with you for inviting Miss Carnot to visit here, you know there are strange things said of her," said Bella as the two sat on the porch.

"Why, my child, you surprise me. I never knew such a general favorite, and I'm sure I have heard you say that she had more brains than all the girls you knew."

"She has too much, Aunty."

"And as for the things said of her, I'm surprised that a girl of your good sense should think of them a second time. If the saint of Sienna were in society there would be idle and malicious things said of her. Don't, I beg you, fall into that pitfall of the vulgar. The wise woman in this world is she who never knows that there is any thing evil said of another, for it is an admission to even know when evil is said. It is the belief in evil, without evidence, that defiles. Pray, my child, never know there is any thing else to do than right and you'll never hear evil, because people who hint it will be talking to you in an unknown tongue."

Bella was not entirely persuaded by this nihilistic doctrine, for that young lady was convinced of Theo's irredeemable hopelessness. Perhaps she would have had some difficulty in defining the overt sins committed. Indeed, I am sure that the stake would not have drawn from her the special atrocity that had set her in such a state of mind against the female offender. It sometimes happens that a fair dame resents the fine effect a cast off gown or some idle bit of frippery gives a favorite maid, and I have known feminine minds of the most admirable equilibrium, quite upset by the marriage of a despised rival with a disdainfully rejected lover. It requires uncommon magnanimity to give in this world—unless the thing given is of no sort of use to us, and then it must be really given, not clutched from a reluctant grasp.

But of course Bella's aunt was unconscious of the thoughts passing in that young lady's mind. Indeed Bella could not have given any very clear notion of them herself—or rather she would not have done so even to herself. Jealous of her cousin—faugh! what was her cousin to her. Had he not been her adorer these two years? Couldn't she have made of him what she would? But she didn't want to make any thing of him. He was an agreeable—yes, an able young man, not nearly so clever as Mr. Gray, nor so diverting as cousin Philip. Hadn't she dreaded his tender outbreaks and purposely held him at arms' length, chattering literature and inane philosophy? What was it to her that his eye lighted with animation at the crocodile cleverness of that designing little marplot Theo? The two ladies sat silently under the deep shadows of the glass awning, watching the gleams of light as they traveled over the dark masses of foliage. The night was full of the beauty of repose; the air heavy with fragrance. The concerts of the night birds contrasted with the quiet of the château. The ladies watching the shadows, saw, before they heard, a horseman flying toward the porch. Mrs. Arden rose with a sharp exclamation of fright; Bella sat quite still and clenched the slender arm of the chair. The

horseman leaping to the ground flung the bridle on the horse's neck, and as he distinguished the ladies, he faltered: "Madame Arden, there has been a slight accident—Mademoiselle Carnot has been thrown from her horse, and it is feared her arm is broken." It was the vicomte who spoke. He added, "Your son directed me to ride forward and tell you, and to have a chamber prepared for the young lady."

"Is my son—" Mrs. Arden choked—"is my son unhurt?"

"Oh, quite unhurt. It was he who caught the horse and is conveying the wounded lady."

Bella alone heard the fervent sigh that seemed thanksgiving as well as relief. Mrs. Arden went off at once to prepare for the invalid.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE WOLF IN THE FOLD.

BELLA asked the vicomte how the accident had happened, but he did not know very clearly. The couple had been riding slowly behind the rest of the party and lost the way. The first the rest knew of any thing amiss was the horse of Miss Carnot dashing along the road riderless. Mr. Gray and Mr. Kent had ridden back, and when the vicomte came up Miss Carnot was still in a swoon. The accident had happened about four miles from the château and it would be an hour or more before the party could arrive. It was ten o'clock when the cavalcade appeared. Theo, still unconscious and moaning, was lifted from Elliot's arms by her brother, who had been sent for, and carried into the house—Elliot accompanying her to the door of her room. He was frightfully pale and as the figure of Theo disappeared he staggered and fell. His mother had gone into the room with Theo, but hearing the fall came out with a stifled cry.

"Ah, my son—my son—you are hurt. My God!" she

groaned, "he is dead. Hush," she cried, as Edith flung herself at her brother's side sobbing convulsively. "He has fainted, go and call some of the gentlemen to help him to his room." Trajan was at the foot of the stairs and Edith cried out to him :

"Ah, Mr. Gray, Elliot is dreadfully hurt! come and help us." Almost in a bound Trajan was at Elliot's side. His mother had torn off his coat, and opened his shirt; an ugly bruise on the right side showed that he had been injured either by the hoofs of the horse, or by falling upon some sharp object. Trajan, lifting the inanimate form, carried it to Mrs. Arden's room. The doctor who had been sent for was engaged with Theo, and for the moment the young man's care was in Trajan's hands. He had seen enough of abrasions to know exactly how to treat this, and under his directions, calmly given, Elliot was soon restored to consciousness. It was from the severe ordeal after the hurt, rather than the hurt itself, that he succumbed on arriving. The doctor coming presently reported Theo.'s arm badly twisted, but no bones broken. His examination of Elliot showed that the fourth rib was crushed but not broken. Beyond a temporary confinement nothing serious was apprehended. Elliot regaining his composure asked for Theo. Informed that she was not seriously hurt, he put his left arm out, drew his sister to him, and began to whisper in her ear as he was fond of doing as a child. Edith's eyes were red and swollen and she sobbed anew as the foolish fellow revived the tender memory of other days. Mrs. Arden sat beside the bed, composed enough now that she knew the worst.

"That was a brute of a horse, Gray, he might have been one of Grovel's Mexicans. In his antics he planted both heels in my side as I ran down the gulch to seize him; luckily his fore feet slipped, or I should have been done for. I never saw such a fearless creature as that girl. By George! she never winced nor screamed. The brute rolled on her arm after he fell, and she got up as coolly as though in a

drawing-room. It was not until the pain overcame her that she gave in and fainted."

The doctor ordered quiet for the patient and refused to permit more than one person in the room.

"I will bring my books down and sit here, Mrs. Arden," said Trajan; "you need all your strength for to-morrow."

Mrs. Arden shook her head decisively: "No, I must be at my son's side."

But the doctor intervened. On no account could madame remain there. It would needlessly agitate the invalid, who would presently fall into a sound sleep, thanks to the medicine he had given him.

"Furthermore, madame has another invalid to attend."

Thus recalled to her duty, Mrs. Arden agreed that Philip and Trajan should take turns in watching Elliot at night, as Philip almost resented the suggestion of a stranger usurping his place near his kinsman. It was far into the morning before Elliot awoke, and it was Trajan's anxious eyes he looked into.

"How is Miss Carnot?" was his first impulsive inquiry.

Trajan had not thought to ask, but answered at a venture that she was doing well the last he had heard—which was true, for the last he had heard was the doctor's message delivered in Elliot's presence. He was relieved of embarrassment by the entrance of Edith, who came to say that Theo had breakfasted and inquired for Elliot, not knowing that he had been hurt. Elliot listened eagerly and asked a dozen questions about the heroine, whether her arm would be disfigured; whether every thing was done for her that could be done? He was gratified to hear that Bella had sat in her room and watched over her, and declared that she was a trump. Edith strove to divert the subject from Theo, but not until he had exhausted it did the invalid answer a question or refer to any thing else.

The doctor came in and examined the bruises again,

expressed great satisfaction with their condition, and promised the young man's recovery within a fortnight if he kept perfectly quiet and gave himself no agitation. Mrs. Arden came in while this was delivered. She looked anxious, however, and showed that the tears were ready to come upon the smallest pretext; but at the breakfast table she appeared serene, and, on a hint from one of the company that a sick-house was not the place for strangers, begged that no one would think of curtailing the duration of his or her visit.

"We shall look to you, Philip, to maintain the gayety of the house, and see that our friends are not made gloomy by the mishap."

In spite of the kind lady's cheerful attempt, the gathering was in marked contrast with the full table of the evening before. With Elliot, Edith, Bella, and Trajan gone, the conversation flagged, in spite of the vigorous efforts of Philip and Mrs. Briscoe. The young Englishman, Claridge, was reminded by the accident of similar episodes in his numerous visits to the demesnes of the British aristocracy, where, it might be inferred from his artless confidences, he was only less sought than the Prince of Wales himself. His bouting with the aristocracy at once gave him high standing with Mrs. Rossitor. She adored the British peerage. She could tell the relationship of every personage in that hierarchy down to the remotest consanguinal kith. The precious volume preserving these sacred memoranda never left her intimate baggage. Her severest affliction, in a well-ordered life, was the angelic Phœbe's hoydenish indifference to these awesome genealogies. It was a severe trial to her that in spite of constant teaching Phœbe referred to the noble Britons, with whose acquaintance fortune had blessed the Rossitors, as "poky old shrumps, who treated Americans like ruff-scuff and only tolerated them when they gave fine dinners. Who"—the exasperating young woman would scornfully ask—"ever knew a British noble able to pay his

hotel bill? who ever saw one of them that wasn't skulking to economize or avoid creditors? who ever saw one that didn't tolerate all other races as a sort of ministering domesticity to his, the Briton's, needs? The men were all overgrown, red-faced and redolent of brandy, the women ungainly dowdies, sneering at graces they could not possess."

Sentiments like these froze the genial current of Mrs. Rossitor's soul, and she avoided expression of opinions that were likely to lead Phœbe into the utterance of them. But Claridge's congenial confidences threw her off her guard. She was aroused to reminiscences of the great personages she had met and entertained in Dresden and other German capitals, where the British aristocracy are to be found in great numbers. Her list of lords and ladies was long and dazzling. It was remarked that the small Tom took on an exceedingly knowing look as mamma dwelt fondly on the imposing memories. Phœbe interlined *sotto voce* comments to her neighbor, the Vicomte, which threw that light-hearted young nobleman into convulsions of merriment.

Jules made his appearance after breakfast with Mrs. Grovel, her son, and daughter. Mrs. Arden was not equal to the ordeal of receiving them, and the placable Mrs. Briscoe welcomed the bizarre group.

"Gracious, what a misfortune!" cried Mrs. Grovel, violently fanning her red cheeks and ample person. "And then we had set a week from Thursday for a garden party and ball, and all of Lafe's Court friends were to be at it. Bad luck always follows me," she sighed,—then added, as if she had just thought of it: "Can't we go to Theo? she must be dying to see her friends."

Mrs. Briscoe rose and led the way, the stout lady puffing out comments on the furniture and apartments as she sailed majestically behind.

"I declare this shato is nicer than ours, and we pay a fortune for it, just for the season. Them French nobles

would rob a red Indian of his beads—the selfish wretches—I can't put up with them nohow—I shall be mighty glad when we get back to Napoleonville, where we do have some comforts without wearing our souls out. I guess your sister and you are glad you ain't got no small children to traipse around the world to get schooling and things. For my part, I think the Hanks High School at Helena good enough to edicate any person, no matter what their station. My brother, the Guv'nor, was taught there, and every body knows he's the biggest statesman in the States."

At this juncture the statesman's sister came to the bedside where Theo was propped up on the pillows, looking any thing but an invalid.

"Well, I vow! you're a nice girl, ain't you? What in torment did you go off galivanting on them strange horses for, when Lafe's always knows you and acts docile and proper? We were frightened to death, and the girls wanted to come over, but Jules wouldn't hear of it. I hope you are well nursed—you must come home with us right away—just as soon as ever you are able to put your foot on the floor."

She had kissed the laughing invalid while delivering this apostrophe, and nodded benignantly to Bella, who arose and withdrew when the portentous figure entered. Mrs. Briscoe, finding Theo in need of nothing, left the friends together.

"Mighty pretty girl, that Bella—I told Lafe he ought to shine up for her—and let them smirking duchesses and marquises go about their business. It's my opinion that all they want of him is his money. Bella don't need that—she has several millions in her own right. Her pa left her a half interest in the Ivanhoe, and Grovel says it's paying bricks of silver."

"I'm afraid Lafayette is late in the field for Bella," said Theo, keeping an eye on the door and speaking in a low tone. "I understand she's engaged already."

"I wouldn't be afraid to risk Lafe's chances with any girl,

so long as the knot isn't tied," said the fond mother with a complacent toss of the head. "Lafe 'll be the richest man in Montana in five years. He 'll be president of the States if he wants to be, and I'd like to see the girl could snicker at them prospects! You're not sweet on young Arden?" she asked suddenly and apropos of nothing that had gone before, searching the invalid's face with frank scrutiny.

"Dear me, no! It would be no use: he's spoken somewhere else," says Theo, modestly casting down her green eyes.

"Do tell! well, how these young people do tangle themselves up. He's a good catch. Grovel tells me the Ardens control more capital than all the banks of California, and there's but two children—the brother and sister."

"Yes, I've heard that they are very rich," said Theo yawning.

"Is the young man as well favored as my Lafe? I'm told he's very good looking."

"Well, that's a question of taste," said Theo diplomatically. "Lafayette is certainly larger and would be more observed in a company than Mr. Arden."

"Well, I'm set on making Lafe marry an American, after Amanda's disgusting trick. There's no trusting these nasty French, and as for an English woman, I'd as soon have a fan-tailed pigeon for a daughter-in-law. It riles me just to see them porridge-faced, skim-milk creatures with their airs and affectations."

"Lafayette is lucky in having such a guardian as his mother," insinuated Theo soothingly.

"Indeed I should think so. I often tell Grovel that if it wasn't for me, the children would grow up as wild as rutabagas and amount to dry shucks, for all the advantages our money gives us in the world. I declare I think I was happier when we were roughing it in Yahoo Gulch and I stood over the washtub all the morning and cooked for forty men in the mines. We had gay and hearty times then, I

tell you," and the matron sighed and surveyed her fat hand encased in a six-button kid, wrinkled and creased like a layer of very brown cream on a surface of very red milk. "D'ye think you'll be up to the ball and fête—what do you call it, I can never get them nasty French names on the end of my tongue as Lafe and the girls do?"

"*Fête champêtre*," amended Theo. "Yes, I shall be able to take my part, don't fear. I wouldn't miss such an event as that for a good deal, and I'll give you the list of my guests as I promised you this very day."

"Do—Lafe's going to have all his dukes and duchesses and no end of court people. The music's all bespoke and some of the big guns of the opera are coming down. I don't see where we're going to stick all the folks. I wonder if the Ardens wouldn't take some of them in—they've got room enough here for a whole camp—suppose you ask them—you know them better than I do!"

"Oh pray, dear Mrs. Grovel, don't dream of suggesting such a thing! The Ardens are the most punctilious people in the world, and though they would consent to receive your company they would cut you dead ever after. No—that's not to be dreamed of," cried Theo eagerly, terrified at the very possibility of such a *faux pas*.

"I'm sure I see nothing wrong in it," declared the honest dowager. "The folks are to be the biggest guns in Paris—the ministers and all them great folks you read of at Eugenie's swarreys. I can't understand the thin-skinnedness of some folks. We would do the same thing in a minute, and think it only neighborly."

Theo was unspeakably relieved when a servant appeared and announced that mademoiselle's brother asked permission to enter. Jules came in, saying:—"Theo, Lafayette sends you these roses and asks to be received."

"Ah, that would never do," began Theo.

"Well, I'm sure—why not?" broke out the astonished dame of Yahoo Gulch. "If Lafe can't come into the

room to see a sick friend, with his mother and sister by, I'd like to know why—these finicky furrin notions are enough to drive one crazy."

"It would never do here," said Theo appealingly. "The Ardens are very strict in the observances of the conventions; why, last night when I was carried here in a faint Mr. Elliot in all the agitation of the moment wouldn't cross this threshold, but handed me over like a bundle to his aunt and the servants."

"Well, I hope the time 'll never come that the roof of my mouth 'll get so cold that butter won't melt on my tongue," ejaculated the astonished matron.

Theo entrusted a tender message to the honest Lafayette, assuring him of her lively gratitude and a promise to be with him in a day or two, if he had no better company.

"Shall I send one of the girls over to cheer you up, Theo?" asked Mrs. Grovel as she kissed the invalid good-by. Assured that the kind proffer was not needed, she waddled out, stopping to examine and feel the draperies as she went.

"What extraordinary people these Grovels are!" said Theo, laughing, as Jules took the vacant seat. "I'm afraid we shall be compromised, being so much with them."

"There's doesn't seem to be much danger of that. You are fixed in this house for the present, and you can manage to finish your visit here if you care to. I shall go back to Paris next week."

"Close the door, Jules," said Theo, adjusting the pillows and turning so that she could watch the young man's face. "Have you thought over what I suggested to you?" she resumed as the young man reseated himself—"the *grands partis* in this family. Either Edith or Bella will make a prince of the man that marries her?"

"True enough, you restless intriguer—but every man can't have them for the making of fine eyes."

"But any man can have any woman, if he sets his head, as well as his heart, to the work."

"All men—no man, that I know, has such a head as you, Jacky. If I had your head I would guarantee to marry any woman in the world, barring the impediment of a previous marriage contract! Besides, Jack, I'm the poorest sort of an intriguer. Not for conscience' sake," he added laughing lightly, "but through pure indolence. I ought to be rich. God—when I see such dolts as Arden, Grovel, and scores more with wealth pouring in on them, sleeping or waking, I want to blow my brains out. I ought to be rich. Life is valueless without money. I am just the man to use it magnificently—but how to get it. By heaven, Jack, I sometimes dream of turning highwayman or bandit, or any thing that will give me a great stake at one stroke; but it is all a dream—for I wouldn't for the vaults of the bank of France put myself in the power of the law—I don't say justice, mind you, for if half the rich men you and I know had justice done them they would share the fate of the ancient heroes of Hounslow Heath."

"You talk like a simpleton, *mon cher*. By a stroke you can be rich, and with no crime, or even compromise. You are a very handsome fellow. You make a better figure in society than any man I know. You are irresistible with women. Bella is not engaged. She has a lurking fancy for her cousin, but I'll clear the way for you there."

"What, Jack—you don't mean that after refusing a prince you would take up with this prating dreamer?"

"I didn't say that I was to 'take up' as you put it—Dunce! I said that I would keep the field clear while you engage the enemy."

"By Jove, Jack, you ought to have been the man of the family: you ought to be the minister of a great State. What a brain you've got," and the young man bent over and kissed the pretty hand lying on the counterpane. She stroked his hair fondly, caressing the handsome fellow as a mother her spoiled darling. Then resumed musingly:

"There's no time to lose, dear. I can't tell you how irk-

some my *métier* is growing. The society of these odious Grovels fairly makes my teeth chatter—though Lafayette could be made tolerable with some trouble, under proper influences, and I think Clare would do him a world of good." She shot a significant glance at Jules as she hinted this audacious glimpse of her purpose.

"You consummate schemer—that's the secret of your inexplicable amiability to these gawky parvenus. Before Heaven, Jack Carnot, I feel unworthy to touch the hem of your garment."

Theo received this florid outburst, as Elizabeth might have listened to the adoration of Essex, and continued: "This lucky accident gives me the pretext I needed to fix Clare out here. You will go home at once and represent my cruel torments and my cries for her company. I will make known her natural solicitude to Mrs. Arden, and you will take her written invitation to our sister. Then our lines are drawn, our campaign set, and the Carnots close the map of Europe again a regnant dynasty."

She turned and rang the bell, and to the domestic who answered said, "Please see if Madame Arden can spare a moment to come here. I want to speak with her."

Of course Madame Arden sympathized at once with the natural desire of the sufferer to have her sister, and apologized for not herself thinking of the matter. She instantly wrote a note of cordial welcome, and Jules set out immediately to bring up the remaining forces for Theo's masterly campaign, the invalid's final admonition to her brother being to instruct Clare's maid to pack all her finest robes in the trunks, without saying any thing to her mistress. The conquerors in this world are those who bear the smallest details in mind, and Theo had learned the secret thoroughly. Clare, very much agitated by the unexpected news, made no objection, of course, and was at Theo's bedside before sunset, the artful Jules ordering the baggage to be sent after them. As Jules was leaving the room Theo called his attention to

a note on the table addressed to himself. On reading it, he shook with laughter. It was from Theo, directing him to ride over to Meaux and make himself known to the kinsmen of the Carnots—poor but titled people, dragging out a miserable existence in that archiepiscopal town. He was to let them know of the presence of Theo and Clare, and inform them that Madame la Baronne and her son would receive an invitation to spend a fortnight at the Château Duclos, and that Jules would come over to fetch them. "Be prudent and diplomatic in the affair," added the generalissimo. "I count upon this noble kinship to impress W. L. G. and his interesting family, and above all, burn these presents so soon as you have read them."

The servant on duty in Theo's hall looked after the young man in surprise as he walked off laughing over this final evidence of Theo's genius! Mrs. Arden, Bella, and Edith came to welcome Clare. They had never seen her before, and were startled by her majestic and serene, though somewhat faded, beauty. She met their cordiality with high-bred ease—a contrast in every way to the vivacious sisters. She made a marked and excellent effect upon the ladies. She was satisfied to find her sister so much better than she had anticipated, and expressed the hope of taking her home by the end of the week. Mrs. Arden insisted that they would expect a visit from their guest, and the sisters were left alone, Clare begging permission to dine in the invalid's room.

In the morning when Jules came over, Theo gave him a note for Mrs. Grovel, containing the list of guests and a special paragraph recounting the grandeur of her kinswoman the Baroness Pleinevide and her son the young Baron, a captain in the imperial guard. "Dear Mrs. Grovel would please her so much by inviting them at once, as Jules could go and fetch them, before he returned to Paris."

The honest washerwoman was quite taken aback to find that the Carnots were related to noblemen. She regarded

Jules with a new emotion. "Who," she asked herself, "would have supposed that Theo, who shopped for her and received her presents with gratitude, was great-niece to a real nobleman?" The good lady began to regret her confidences to her quondam Satellite. Jules remarked the change of demeanor, and you may be sure he gave Theo a faithful account of the success of her stratagem. That young person evinced no surprise. She laughed a gay little laugh, remarking cynically that she had measured the folks she met in the world, and found that while they differed in size, they were all of the same fiber, spun in the same web, and all bent on eking out their woof in the same direction. It was vital, however, to bring Lafayette on the scene, and for this purpose the day after Clare's coming Theo expressed profound fatigue of her surroundings, and prayed to be taken down to the *salon*. The physician saw no danger in the change, and the invalid, looking very charming indeed, was placed in an alcove off the music room, where the company came to congratulate her. Jules brought Lafayette so soon as the others had dispersed to their different diversions.

He was presented to Clare, and her gentle, distraught air made a perceptible impression upon him. He recognized it at once, as he told his mother, as the real "swell air, just fairly as you see it among the court people." Mrs. Grovel was quite speechless before this superior being, and it was quite as well for Theo's schemes that she was, for whatever chance Lafayette might have in capturing Clare's consent to sharing his fortune, would have been destroyed if his mother had revealed her primitive manners in full to the fastidious beauty. Not that Clare had the faintest suspicion of the comedy in which she was cast for the chief rôle. She tolerated the young man because Jules seemed fond of him, and Theo was amused by his inextinguishable good humor and droll sayings. Jules had been urged by Mrs. Grovel to go off and hurry his relative the Baronne, but the old lady declared that she could not be ready for some days and must get leave

from the general for her son's absence. Theo laughed when she read the stately epistle of her father's cousin. She was "enchanted," La Baronne wrote, "to find that her *parents* were so near, and she would do herself the honor to accept with *empressement* the charming hospitality offered, so soon as she could communicate with her dear son Antoine, who was on duty with his regiment, and meanwhile, she had the high privilege of signing herself, *Mademoiselle's tout devouée*, Amélie Augustine Belprè Baronne de Pleinevide."

Theo said gayly when she read this worldly-wise little note from her *rusé* kinswoman:

"The old lady has got to get a new cap and gown, or she would have been here as fast as the horses could carry her. She probably has dined on hot water soup, a *côtelette* twice a week, with a *ragoût* as a change, since the lamented Baron left her in the independence of widowhood. I doubt very much whether the good-hearted Mrs. Grovel will ever get rid of her, if she takes it into her head to fasten upon that favored household. But in that event we shall have the satisfaction of a good deed, as becomes relatives," she concluded, tapping the amused Jules on the shoulder.

Clare, meanwhile, had been induced to visit the Grovels, where her aristocratic repose produced due effect. Grovel Père, who had an air of perpetual unrest, "allowed" that the young woman looked a good deal more like a princess than the painted and plastered "shrumps" he saw in Paris, and furthermore, she didn't seem to be "talking with her mouth, as if afraid she'd forget the use of her tongue or let her teeth decay for want of air." Amanda declared that she "beat the princess in the convent all hollow," and the little Grovels were, perhaps for the first time in their lives, awed into silence. Mrs. Grovel was so charmed with the paragon, that she avowed her purpose of tempting Theo with the most coveted object in the bazars of the Rue de la Paix to prevail upon her sister to remain as an indefinite adornment to the Grovel household. Clare's quietness among these

exemplars of western *haut ton* was as much the result of surprise as inclination. She had never seen such people. Her life in Paris was that of a recluse. She saw the very poor among the parishioners of St. Philippe du Roule, but it was only as a ministering deess. She felt no arrogant superiority for the new sort of people, she simply felt as a secluded scion of ancient rank and fine manners would feel if launched into the regnant societies of London, Paris, or New York.

She was not lacking in the wit that comes with high refinement, and the humors of the family soon gave them an interest in her eyes that stood them in better stead than their wealth. She won the frantic devotion of the children during the days she passed in the splendid grounds of the stately château. Marion, a bright-faced lad of fourteen, instantly offered her his pony, while Sophronia, a sprite of thirteen, laid her dolls and cherished dainties at the divinity's feet. She was very gentle and sweet to the brood, and moved the honest dowager Grovel to tears of grateful delight when she kissed her two little friends on parting. All this faithfully reported to Theo, put that arch sorcerer in the frame of mind that it may be fancied Prospero was in, when he saw the spells of Ariel binding the young Duke of Milan to the lovely Miranda. And the passive Clare, unconscious of the pivotal part she was playing, what would she have said had she known the instrumentality she was serving in the astute game that was to delude an honest heart?

After all, mused Jules as he took Clare back, we deceive in this world, however honest our intentions. Which of us would dare tell our nearest friend the thoughts that pass in our mind? Do we think of the golden words of the Reverend Felix Allgood as we sit under the ministry of that reverenced divine? Are we filled with contrition when the service bids us repeat the words "forgive us as we forgive?" We live as much to deceive as to be deceived. Which of us is there that won't believe out of hand the most vicious innuendo that the idle

retail to us of our friends, while we turn an incredulous ear only when repeated of ourselves? Clare was moving innocently in the very circles traced out for her, but who will credit her guilelessness when the plot is laid bare and she is sharing the gains with the astute plotter? So if the charity of the world were of more value than its scorn, we might bespeak it for the guiltless in craft, but as it isn't, why waste time over the posing hypocrisy! One vice not only hides another, it excuses it, and the sum is oblivion of both.

Theo was curious to learn Clare's opinion of the family, but dared not ask the question outright. She saw that Clare was more pensive and silent than usual and wisely forebore questioning her. Still another triumph was in store for the conqueror. Two days later La Baronne de Pleinevide arrived in great state in her own carriage, the panels adorned with the arms of the family. A dashing soldier in the blue and gold of the cuirassier set the small Grovels agape with delight. La Baronne, an alert, lithe, little body of seventy-five, skipped out of the chariot and presented herself with the most charming embarrassment to Mrs. Grovel, who happened to be at the porch with her brood about her, when Jules came down, being hastily apprised of the arrival. His kinswoman was already deep in the graces of her hostess, to whom her broken English was an unspeakable comfort. The big guardsman she could only smile at and caress with her friendly glances, as he could speak no English. He made himself irresistible to Amanda and Master Marion, who were adepts in the French tongue. Reproached by Jules for taking the family by surprise and depriving him of the expected pleasure of driving her over from Meaux, La Baronne cried out in her gay French way: "Ah, but it was too much,—what would you? The horses were there, and we have so little occasion to use the coach, now that Antoine is in Paris, I was enchanted to have so good a tour for them."

Jules took occasion to make known the situation to the

guardsman as he showed him to his quarters. The Grovels were represented as a very good sort of *nouveaux riches* who were devoted to his sisters and himself, and he hoped that Madame La Baronne would accept their friendly ways without dwelling too much on their peculiarities.

"*Sapristi!*" cried the guardsman, dazzled by the sumptuous apartment assigned him. "One would be content to be a *Chinois* to be able to afford such magnificence as this. You may be sure mamma will respond with effusion to such hospitable intentions."

He was right. Never was such a gracious old noblewoman seen, since the fairy godmother took up the fortunes of Cinderella. She was urbanity itself to the "Go-vels," whose name she gave up trying to pronounce in comic despair. Taken in state by Jules to make acquaintance with her great grand-nieces, she was captivated by the lively Theo and impressed prodigiously by the *distinguée* Clare, who, she protested, resembled her grandmother, the Countess Belprè. She was lost in astonishment at the surroundings of her kinsfolk. Theo knew that in her heart the old lady had imagined her American relations a species of bedizened savages. The Ardens she pronounced *très distingués*—quite the carriage and mien of the *noblesse*. She touched every one in the company with her child-like joy over her new-found kinsfolk, protesting their goodness in remembering a *veiélle cruche* like herself in these days of fête. She studied Theo with furtive attention when the demoiselle was not aware of the scrutiny. The guardsman was voted capital company by the young men, and Theo finished the day, conscious of having made a masterstroke in her campaign.

"*Eh bien, ma mère*, what do you make of it all?" the guardsman asked, as mother and son sat in the latter's bedroom before bidding her good-night.

"*Hein*," grinned the old lady. "It's plain enough; La Petite Theo has a *parti* to make, and our *noblesse* is to be made to help her."

"But which one? I saw no one paying her court."

"You may be sure it was not for our *beaux yeux* she asked us here. *Soit!* She shall gain her end and she shall pay us for our complaisance—by helping you to one of the *partis*. All these Americans are fabulously rich and you can't go amiss. Select the plainest and you'll be likely to meet less difficulty. At your age looks don't matter. A half million *dot* will enable you to make love at your leisure."

"I have been making love for fifteen years without the half million *dot*—I should like the change *par bleu*."

"Be prudent, *mon cher*, and you shall leave here with a half million *dot*—who knows but a million in your sac?"—said the fond parent as she put up her withered cheek for the good-night kiss.

From which you will remark Theo comes honestly by her Machiavellian principles, and that sooner or later what is bred in the bone comes out in the flesh. How little did the masters and mistresses of these two grand houses, in which for the moment, reader, you and I are lodging, with the splendid and wise and witty and beautiful guests—how little did they dream of the parts assigned them in this drama of their own choosing! The candid and kindly Mrs. Arden, with her life wrapped up in the lad tossing in fever there, distrusted nothing for him more grievous than the silly bruise on his side; saw no further into the future than the day which should make him the husband of Bella, or, if fortune should deny her that cherished hope, of some other fair and sweet girl worthy of his honest heart. And so the music crashes, and the puppets leer and strut and squeak out yea—when they mean nay, and the masks on their faces are transparent as the limpid dews under the morning sun, compared with the mask on their hearts. Sleep peacefully, lions and lambs—hug your pillows, foxes and asses, for the morrow comes, and still the morrow, and you are lions and lambs, wolves and foxes,

geese and swans, to the end of the play, and who knows what after?

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE RAVINE OF REVÊCHE.

CLARE'S coming lessened the party at Les Charmettes. Philip, so soon as Jules' mission was made known, found that he had urgent business in Paris, and he was seen no more among the company. He intimated vaguely to Elliot that if war were declared, he would volunteer on Gen. Frossard's staff. That veteran was an old friend, whom he had met at West Point in his cadet days, and nothing would delight him more than witnessing a campaign in Europe. Nothing was to be said to his aunts, as such a project would make them miserable, and Elliot, knowing that his cousin was son and brother in the household, promised to be prudent. Theo heard of Philip's sudden departure with a vengeful gleam in the satiny orange-green eyes, that Jules remarked, but could not comprehend. Clare, unconscious that her old lover had been so near her, never knew until long afterward the shock she had escaped.

"Now," murmured the little invalid, "we shall see if it strikes the Ardens as a *mésalliance* to let their precious blood mingle with the Carnots, exile, refugee, valet, usurer and Cotton King, by the divine right of brains."

The humor of the comedy pleased her more than the classic justice to be done; the vengeance upon the race that had brought ruin to the darling of the family. She mused on the strange readiness of every thing to fall into line with her dreams. She had never relinquished the hope of some striking triumph which should eclipse the Ardens; events were of themselves laying a train which should add embitterment to the overshadowing she had dreamed and schemed. Since her masterful success in vanquishing poverty Theo had con-

vinced herself that nothing was impossible to the man that knew his own powers and himself surely—for he knew others, and to confront facts was to overcome them. She hugged herself in a remorseless sort of joy to think that she was planted in the very citadel of the enemy and that it depended on herself solely, whether they were to be cajoled into accomplices or subtly enmeshed into instruments of the designs fate had put it into her hands to carry out.

Judge her not too harshly! She had tasted the cup that made life bitter, at an age when such infirmities as hers should have been soothed by the exotic odors of love. She had not become soured as we see strong men; she did not make vulgar revenge a prime object in the involved scheme of cross purposes she had set her incomparable powers to carry out. She had the instincts of the fine lady, whose soul has become the slave of intellect. She would have much preferred straightforward methods and the gracious amenities of her sex, had fate not so shifted the instruments that she was obliged to use them covertly and in the darkness.

She had never lost the purpose to make Philip repent in the anguish he had caused Clare, the dastard wrong he had done her. She had imagined a fine poetic justice in bringing him to her own chariot and having kept him on foot, with uncovered head and beseeching eyes, to dismiss him in scorn! But he had unexpectedly found nothing congenial, where the rest of his sex stood with adulating delight. Through Clare herself nothing was possible. She refused to go where there was any likelihood of an encounter with her quondam lover. Even Theo's disaster would not have moved Clare, had she known that Philip was part of the Crécy company.

It was not sheer wickedness—let this be borne in mind, in the singular girl's justification. Most of us are what we must be, not that we feel we are born to be, or should be, and what we know we are derelict in not being. Theo had no idea that she ought to be any thing else than the conquer-

ing arbiter in the lives and fortunes of all who were thrown within her range. It was bred in her bone, and by inheritance that worldly consideration was worth any price and justified any means in securing. She transmuted all the sacred gifts of womanhood, rare mind, winning wit, intellect, heart and brain, in the flaming crucible of vanity and egotism, blind to the dross into which the ingredients were transformed. She was never the dark intriguer. She waited for the forces she needed to come to her hand and made her resources irresistible by eschewing mystery, even in her boldest projects.

It was not the evil people said of her, above breath, she feared; that could be met and discredited. It was the evil that might be thought, and by long thinking assume dangerous shape, that she guarded against. She never forgot the Baconian apothegm she had once heard Jules read: "If a man be thought secret he invites discovery." Unreserve was the conquering shaft in her armory, that she counted on with never unjustified confidence. She concealed more by a bewildering frankness than another, less adroit, by the most studious reserve. Hate she would never permit herself to cherish for an instant. It was a silly waste of vital tissue, and her beauty needed all her blood and perfect digestion. She never threw that precious force away therefore.

Upon no injury, slight, defeat, rival, or whatsoever source of bitterness she encountered, did she throw away a hate. She had been foolish enough to love. That was a lesson that taught her the danger of burning the lamp at both ends. She loved still, but as we love the dead, with a resigned forgetfulness; the passing worship of an ideal, in conflict with our stronger passions.

Philip at Les Charmettes would have been a double impediment to the orderly and decisive manipulation of the conduct of the people in whom her interests were enlisted. While Philip remained free Clare would never marry—for, though she never said it, Theo knew that her sister would not give up

the dream of the past. For, among other things that she had learned since coming to Paris, was the fact that Philip's abandonment had been forced upon him. He had led a wild life in his college days there and become involved in a *mésalliance.*

So far as she could permit herself to hate, she hated Philip Kent; while his influence at Les Charmettes remained undisturbed she could hope for no permanent hold on Elliot. She suspected that Bella was the attraction that had kept Philip from his Norway project, and if he made headway in that new love she would see the dream of her life balked. She would hold the same cup to Bella's lip that had been held to Clare's. She had already shaken Elliot's constancy. She would humiliate the Ardens as the Carnots had been humiliated. All the means were in her hands, if she could but drive Trajan and Philip from the family for a time. The big Antoine must be made use of to dispose of them, and she thought she saw a way of bringing the two into such antagonism, as the Frenchman, with a hint, would be able to turn to account. She took Philip's departure as a truce, not a finality; she foresaw that so soon as Clare quit Les Charmettes he would be back; but she meant either to fix Clare there until her ends were served, or secure Philip's neutrality by other measures.

It had not been faring so well with Elliot these days of Theo's covert triumph. The evening of the second day he was feverish and filled with excruciating pain.

The poor lad rambled in the strangest fashion of sparrows and flowers. Then breaking off suddenly he pleaded with some one earnestly to come to him out of the water, and not die. Then he painted a roseate picture of two friends who should go through life illustrating every thing famous in romance. Once or twice he named Trajan, but in an appealing or remonstrating way. On the seventh day all pain and danger had passed, and the patient was permitted to sit by the window. Trajan brought his easel down and sketched most of the time,

while Edith read from Walter Scott or Thackeray. Theo. insisted on sharing the invalid's imprisonment an hour or more each day, and when she was announced Trajan always made a pretext to quit the chamber, leaving Mrs. Arden or Edith with the invalids. Resuming his former haunts, the young man passed a great deal of time in the woods, sometimes alone, sometimes with Bella and one or more of the guests.

Bella showed impartial preferences to none of the gallants. Sometimes she set out with Bellechasse, enjoying his pretense of a liking for walking—which no Gaul was ever known to tolerate. Her patient interest in Hector's introspective prattle led that young man to believe that he was the favored suitor, and he gave himself fine airs accordingly. Before a week was over the young girl knew all the Bostonian had ever seen or experienced, and according to his showing that was a prodigious amount. His prowess in battle was his favorite, as it was his constant theme, and Bella found herself wondering that he wasn't a major-general or great military dignitary. Those who observed Hector closely saw a proposal in his eyes for days. His cheeks, red as apples, fairly glowed with the sense of coming favor, and his intent and mysterious glance, by which he impressed the world with the vastness of his mental possessions, deepened in hidden suggestion. Breakfast was hardly over when he asked Bella if she felt like walking to the woods of Revêche. Bella was meditating a walk and would be ready later in the afternoon. Trajan, happening to hear the dialogue, said to Hector soberly:

"Keep clear of the Spanish bulls in the Baron Rothschild's part of the wood. They are annoying, and under some provocations dangerous. There were so many attacks on strangers last year that the baron gave orders that the brutes should be confined, but they manage to break out for all that. Should you come across one you need have no fear if you manage properly. Don't turn your back on one, if he comes at you, for in the open field it will be rather playful-

ness than viciousness that prompts his attentions, But woe to you if you turn tail without sufficient start and a friendly tree or hedge. . I learned a good deal of the race in Andalusia and have often driven a single bull away by facing him."

Now by a common impulse all the males of the company mocked the vainglories of the rotund Bostonian. His artless self-importance amused them, and when they heard Trajan's admonition they fell to recounting the horrors that surprises in the open fields by bulls had wrought. Hector listened silently to these tales of taurine terror, saying nothing until the dismal yarns were exhausted. He favored his tormentors with a blood-curdling adventure in Bulgaria, to illustrate how well equipped he was to encounter the neighboring horns should they beset him in his walks abroad. He had, he declared, slaughtered the fiercest bull among the wild herds of the Balkans, and was at that moment the possessor of the medal of valor, presented by the Hospador himself to signalize this gallantry. The sly Miss McNair, sitting by, could not resist a gentle stab at the ingenuous hero. Every body enjoyed the shrewd spinster's jokes—even those at whose expense they were made. Affecting an admiring interest in Hector's self-sounded exploits, Kate said guilelessly :

"Ah, Mr. Hector, you must show us all your medals and orders when we get to Paris. I'm very fond of things of that sort, and have a collection myself."

"Not won by deeds in the field?" asked the vicomte gravely.

"No, picked up in little out-of-the-way shops in Paris, Rome, and London!"

Hector didn't understand why there was such a hearty laugh as he went off to prepare for the interview, which he resolved was to settle his fortunes. Trajan was talking to Elliot, when the servant announced Mademoiselle Theo. as about to enter. He said he had a bit of sketching to finish, and hastened toward the dressing room door.

"I say, Trajan, why do you go? I want to talk over something with you and Miss Theo. Do you know she is incomparable company?"

"Oh! one's company and two's none—I really must get at my sketch while I have the idea warm in me," and Trajan fled as Theo.'s chair was set beside the open window. Curiously enough the sight of Edith standing in the hall below quite drove the pressing need of the sketch from his mind. He ran lightly down the stairway and said, as he reached the little maid:

"You have often asked to see the Ravine of Revêche; this is a perfect day; not too warm; and it will be a great lark to surprise the others who are going there to appear mysteriously among them. I know a secluded path that shortens the distance nearly one-third. We shall have a capital time."

Edith was delighted, nothing would please her better, and when she had gone to apprise mamma and Elliot, she would be at Mr. Gray's disposal. She tripped lightly up the stairs, Trajan's eyes following the willowy graceful figure with perhaps something more than the artist's love of fine lines and sinuous movement. I'm afraid that if Theo.'s bright eyes had happened to fall upon the artist at that moment, the sight would have made a blur upon the clear surface of the mirror in which she inwardly contemplated her meditated triumphs.

The young people set out directly, passing through the vocal covert, and over the little gurgling brook where the fairness of Elliot's sister had first flashed upon the preoccupied mind of Trajan. He had ever since felt a quite unaccountable tenderness for the spot, and the pensive Edith had several times surprised the young man standing silent and quite absurdly guilty, when she appeared, gazing into the limpid pool and idly flinging honeysuckle sprays into the eddying waters. On other occasions the wise little maid, doubtless reluctant to interrupt the poet's communings, stole

softly away, without making her presence known, though there were seasons when, not finding him there, she, too, studied the purling water and fed its gurgling shallows with buds from the honeysuckle, as she had seen him do. As for Trajan, he had no notion that he was worshiping the spirit of a shrine in these dryad devotions upon the altar of a momentary memory, nor reflected that while :—

> " Some there be who shadows kiss
> Such have but a shadow's bliss."

More than that he didn't ask—or rather, it did not happen to him to think of more. He had no notion of distinguishing his fondness for Edith from his love for her brother. She was dear to him because Elliot was his Paladin—for Trajan was young, and an artist, and silly enough to believe in close friendship between men. If he had stopped to analyze the delight he felt in being near Edith he would have said straightway that it was because she was dear to Elliot ; nor did he realize the odd fact, that though Mrs. Arden was equally near Achates, he was conscious of no yearning to watch the changing expression of that comely and gentle countenance !

The thief is a foolish fellow to come in the night ! He could do his business better in the day, for the very audacity of it is his protection. Trajan walked as confidingly into the fowler's net, as though his bruised feet and mangled body had never felt the teeth. He marched dreaming and careless into the flowery ambuscade, no more feeling the soft pricking of the thorns under the rose leaves, than if his hands were gauntleted and he bore the armor of life, that shields from its roseate missiles as well as its slings and arrows. It was Elliot's face that he felt assured he saw as his brush lingered on the details of the sketch, now transferred to canvas. And the days went dreamily on. The divine mystery enveloping him deeper and deeper every hour as he walked, stalked, and rode—by the eyes that were not Elliot's, but dear because they were like his !

Yet you will readily see that a prudent young man who had just suffered such a massacre of the sensibilities as this preposterous fellow, should have been on his guard! He was not in the least. He allowed himself to gaze on the bewitching blue eyes and golden tresses of the gentle, tender girl, and never took the trouble to ask himself the cost of the loss of such opportunities. I own I have no patience with this young man, in certain phases of his conduct, as I hinted when this history opened—I am merely putting into narrative what befell him, from the testimony of others as well as himself; and ridiculous and contradictory as you now see him, I have lightened the colors as much as I could while keeping good faith with my duty as biographer. Yes, condemn him as he dawdles along the hedges, plucking the scarlet coquelicot, stringing gauzy blades of fern into nosegays, and luring the artless girl into weaving them in her hair, on her hat, and even on her gown, to give him a study for a pastoral, forsooth! Out upon you, hulking hypocrite! Have you never read the simplest rudiments of love-making?

Why the youngest reader that condescends to follow your aggravating adventures, knows just as well where this is to end, as you do the current of the brook that gurgles through the fields of my lord baron yonder! And thus it always is; in the years when we love and are made to be loved, we go on blind as the bat at noonday, unforeseeing as the grub that gleams into wings and radiance by the action of the amorous air. And so, with the yawning gulf of treachery barely closed in the lurid horizon behind him, Trajan tramps over the green fields, under the clustering blossoms, with a heart light as the spray that plays on the wave, and a happiness deep as the depths that shelter its infinite mysteries, tragedies, and riches. Deep and lasting emotions thrive on silence, I think. At all events, the two were quite content to walk along, only occasionally breaking silence with the most absurd commonplaces, which to record would only give the reader a poorer opinion of the young

man, while Edith, as is the prerogative of the sex, may be as sweetly inane as she pleases. Trajan, of course, knowing the path, was free to look in his companion's eyes and she—obliged to find out the beauties he was perpetually apostrophizing—was naturally compelled to look into his eyes to see what he was looking at. Beside the brook of Revêche grew clusters of star-like marguerites, and what should enter into Edith's perverse head but to pluck a handful and ask him to name one while she named the other.

"Shall we tell it in French? I like the French words the best," said Edith with a maiden's right to disregard grammar for emphasis.

"Tell what?" says Philander, stupidly holding the flower to his lips.

"Why, did you never say the litany of the marguerite?" asked Miss Innocence with wide, questioning eyes.

"No, I never did—teach it to me!"

"Well—you—name the girl you want to marry—to yourself, you know," adds Miss Mentor blushing, in altogether surprising confusion.

"To marry—to myself?" echoes Trajan, puzzledly.

"Oh, dear me, how obtuse you are. I mean, think to yourself of the name of the lady you would like to marry, then name the flower by her name."

"But, I don't want to marry any one," stammers Philander reflectively, as though such an idea had never kept him in months of delicious torture, and he had not lain awake weeks o' nights dreaming of the possibility.

Confounded by this contradiction of words and acts, the astonished vestal of the floral mysteries drew back and became so preoccupied in a militant snail rearing its horns under a wild pink, that she quite forgot the marguerites and their symbolic purpose. Trajan wondered why her cheeks were so red, and felt a pang at having wandered so far. She was fatigued by such a walk. They must sit down and recover lost energies.

"Don't you feel tired? We have walked fully two miles. I shouldn't have come so far, but I saw Bella and Hector pushing on towards the Rothschild farm up on the hill yonder. Come," he added, as if inspired by a new zeal, "tell me the mystery of the marguerites. I'm surprised that I have never heard it, for I have plucked bales of them about Crécy."

"But people only learn the mystery when they want to find out whom they are going to marry," and as Edith was still studying the movements of the snail her blushes became still more a matter of surprise to the dull Philander.

"Well, then, I shall not be apt to learn, as I don't know any one I want to marry," and he pulled the unoffending leaves from their velvet cushion with a movement that would have meant conviction if the hands had not shown a tell-tale tremble.

"That is the most extraordinary thing I ever heard. Why even Elliot wanted to marry ever so many years ago. It was the governess. But he was quite miserable about it, until papa got him a pony. Then when he was in Harvard he frightened us all by falling in love with one of the dancing young women in the English troupe. He really proposed to her, but papa managed to break it off."

"No," said Trajan, reflectively, as though deeply impressed with these fragile amours of his friend, "I never thought I should like to marry an actress, or a schoolmistress. I did ask a woman I believed to be an angel to marry me, and she proved to be a monster!"

"A monster!" stammered Edith, shrinking back.

"Ah, I mean a worldly monster, selfish, cruel, and heartless."

"And"—timidly—"was that long ago?"

"As time is counted, no. As feelings count, a thousand years."

"Then you no longer love her," added the pertinacious catechiser.

"Love her," said Trajan, and an expression almost malignantly contemptuous came into his face; then he added in a firm voice, "No, the very sight of her is a burden to me. But don't let us talk any more of that. I have buried it now. If you feel equal to another half mile we can join your cousin by the ravine of Revêche, where there is a mystic spring to show you."

Edith had another question ready, but the last words stopped it. "When you find the girl you want to marry, I will teach you the rubric of the marguerite."

"Meanwhile I may keep this one to see if I can solve the mystery by my own efforts—may I not?" And quite unabashed the impudent fellow put it calmly in his vest pocket. With this they set out toward the ravine. Edith found a distant object very interesting at the moment, and of course did not see the fate of the flower, nor meet the expression in the silly fellow's eye. Then silence fell upon them again. They had quit the fields and emerged into an embowered path under the deep shadow of a rocky palisade.

The rocky façade was almost as regular as the wall of a temple, the edge above jutting out in tables of cliff trellised with fringes of mosses and growing things. Pointing to a shelf projecting further over their heads than the others, Trajan recounted its legend. In ancient times a troubadour had sung love into the heart of the radiant maiden, whose stern parent, the fierce old duke, owned all the land as far as Meaux. The luckless lad was caught under my lady's window and hurled from the shelf above and fell where a quaint tablet records the sad little story. Trajan pushed the vines aside and Edith read the epitaph "*Les Amants Malheureux.*" She drew back with a little shudder as though she felt the warm blood of the lovers under her feet.

"The peasants say that the boy's blood comes up in these little patches of scarlet, that glow in the deep green like eyes of fire," said Trajan, plucking a sprig of *Œillet* and handing

it to her. A few minutes further on, they came to the mouth of the ravine of Revêche, where the great front of cliff frowned like a vast tablet in the solid rock. The opening was filled with monster oaks and a tangled filmy veil of shrubbery. A slender stream fell in a score of cascades over the mossy stones. The young people penetrated into the fissure, the ravine taking the aspect of a vernal cathedral.

"Here," said Trajan, as they came to a grotto, embowered under tangled tresses of vines, is '*La source de la fidélité.*" The waters of the faithful. The legend is that those who clasp hands in the water will never break faith ; a man will lay down his life and sacrifice every thing for the friend he has made the compact with. On Sundays peasant lovers come here in great numbers."

Edith looked at the spring. The surface was still and brackish. The mosses growing at the edge dipped their green filaments in the water. As the light fluctuated by the movements of the swaying branches, the little pool took on a blood-red hue that rather startled the young girl.

"It looks like blood," she murmured.

"Shall we swear fidelity ?" asked Trajan, bending over the water.

"If you like," answered Edith in curiosity.

"Kneel down, as I am now kneeling, on the moss there. Now give me your hand."

The two hands were clasped under the water. "What, are you frightened ?" asked Trajan as he felt her hand tremble.

"No, but our hands look as if they were in blood. It is a Druid ceremonial, I think."

"No, nothing so serious as that ; it is very pretty. Now repeat the vow when I put it in English, which doesn't improve it ; you mustn't interrupt the formula to ask questions while we are repeating the words."

"But it may be something I can't subscribe to."

"Ah, vows of faith bind lightly, a coquette might take them. Have no fear. The fairies alone are witnesses.

"By the hand that wields the sword,
By the tongue that spake the word;
By the stars that rule above,
To Thee and Thine, I here declare
Knightly faith and Christian prayer.
Man, or maid, or lover—we
Here do swear fidelity."

Edith repeated the lines tremulously. When it was done, Trajan held the dripping hand of his companion and gravely dried it with the soft silky mosses.

"There, oh maid of little faith, the ceremony is done. The vow is entered by the Ariel of the glade, sealed by the signs that rule the hour, as the verse hath it, meaning the star of the season in the heavens. The rite arose long ago, as you see by the words, and the phraseology hardly fits these unknightly times and skeptic inhumanities."

"It is a pretty legend and I am glad we have followed the custom of the country, though I'm afraid we shall be laughed at if we tell it at home."

"Ah, you shall see them all going through with it, even the sardonic Miss Mc Nair, if we can inveigle her to the spot, and I mean to try," said Trajan,. laughing, as he conjured the fantastic figure of the spinster on the mossy margin of the pool.

"Now for an Alpine climb. Do you feel equal to it? When we reach the top we shall be on an open plateau, with a short cut home through pretty farm roads and wheat fields." Yes, the young enthusiast felt equal to any effort. The waters of the spring had distilled the elixir of iron into her veins and she could almost fly, she felt so buoyant. The ascent grew more and more difficult. The path wound upward in narrow zigzags, where the gorge grew wider, the undergrowth thicker, and the scene wilder and more fascin-

ating. As they pushed onward they startled flocks of birds from their retreats in the wild wood, which scuttled off with a noisy whirr, filling the dim recesses with strange cries and shrill clamors. The two toilers climbed up slowly, the path growing so narrow and obstructed with thick brambles and low hanging branches that Trajan had to go before and aid his companion to climb. A half hour's merry scrambling brought them out on the plateau, where cultivated fields spread out before them, separated from the gorge by a thick fringe of scrub oak and dogwood in snowy bloom. Greatly fatigued Edith sat down on the grass, pulling the branches of the dogwood down to despoil them of their blossoms.

"Yonder across the ravine," said Trajan, pointing to the open field to their right, "are the farms of the Rothschild. This is the narrowest point of the chasm, and above us the tube you see spanning the breach is a conduit pipe to carry the water used in irrigating the fields. If you will stand up you can see the farm-houses and cow-stables of the baron. Our friends will come out on that side, as they took the upper road, crossing the bridge a little way ahead of us, concealed by the bushes."

Edith approached the edge of the abyss, but turned back dizzy. The cliffs were as sharply cut as walls, as she could see on the other side where the solid rock went almost straight downward hundreds of feet, with here and there an adventurous bush jutting out straight from the granite and emphasizing its bare appalling surface.

"Shall we wait here until we see our friends on the other side, or shall we move onward and look for them?" said Trajan, glancing toward the farm buildings in the distance.

Before Edith could respond they were startled by a shriek, followed by a hoarse roar. They directed their eyes to the fields on the other side, but could see no one. A shriek, this time faint, and apparently just behind the rim of straggling bushes, set their hearts beating wildly. Trajan started

toward the bridge a mile or more above; but just as he turned Edith gasped:

"It is Bella!"

Trajan turned transfixed. Bella was visible, making for the chasm, some one half-supporting her as she came on exhaustedly. Edith could not imagine what they were flying from, but Trajan knew only too well, and his heart in the horror of the moment fairly ceased to beat. It was too late for him to reach them by the bridge, and even the gulf was a danger which they might not suspect.

As the flying figures came on, Trajan, standing on the very verge of the precipice, shouted:

"Take to the trees—don't approach too near the chasm." Then as he recognized Hector, added in a clear confident tone—"get between Miss Briscoe and the animal and make him follow you—fling your hat at him."

Bella recognized Trajan, gasped something that could not be heard, and sank exhausted to the ground. Hector made an effort to lift her, but looking behind him, saw the bull lowering his head to strike. He rose, flung his hat at the animal, and made toward a clump of stunted oaks near the edge of the cliff. Whether in fear or by calculation, it was the wisest thing he could have done. The animal turning from Bella, rushed at Hector with a loud bellow. He came on, his head lowered, his eyes flaming, his nostrils covered with foam.

Trajan meanwhile had flung off his coat, and charging Edith to have no fear, ran to the water conduit and seizing it with his hands and legs, slipped underneath it and began to pass rapidly across, "hand over hand," as a sailor clambers underneath a rope. Edith looked on in a terror of fascination. The distance was hardly one hundred and fifty feet, but the time seemed an eternity. Half way in the transit her heart sank in sickening horror. The frail pipe sagged and swayed under the heavy weight and regular movements of hands and legs. The climber had reached

the center safely when a loud wrenching sound told that the iron had snapped. Edith closed her eyes and sank to the ground. She looked again, desperately, to see the poor fellow's body tumbling into the black deep, hundreds of feet below. No—by heavens, the stout iron, though wrenched at the joints, was still unbroken. The enormous sag, however, makes the progress more difficult, and he has much climbing and crawling during the last stage of the journey.

In another instant, Edith sobs with joy as Trajan's head touches the jagged edge of the rock. He scrambles to his feet with the swiftness of an acrobat and is at Bella's side in a flash. He has his stout painter's blade in his hand, and as the bull chases Hector about the bushes, he seizes Bella and drags her a few steps, to the gnarled roots of an old stump, covered with running vines. The bull, quitting Hector who has the advantage of the bushes, makes for the new comer in frantic plunges. Trajan tempts him to the side of the stump to Bella's left, and as he comes on, leaps upon it, with his knife in his hand. But the bull's impetus carries him clear beyond and over the stump. Trajan shouts to Hector to distract the beast in a direction opposite Bella.

Hector obeys and sets up a clamor. The monster, disconcerted for a moment, is uncertain which to go at, but Trajan being nearest, he snorts viciously and with a savage bellow dashes at the intruder. Trajan shouts to Hector to try and get Bella to the bushes. He braces himself on the jagged surface of the stump and bends forward slightly. He has the advantage of the beast, for if it leaps up to strike him, he can dodge, and if it keep its head lowered to rip him, the impetus of the rush will be lost. Bellowing and snorting the enemy comes on—with his head down and his flaming eyes fairly bursting from their sockets. But the stump stops the force of his start and he is obliged to pause. Trajan has seen bull fights in Spain and knows the value of self-possession.

As the bull raises himself on the *débris*, he slips to one

side, and as the beast clears the stump, runs his knife to the hilt in the swelling throat. The sharp horn in passing, however, has ripped Trajan's arm badly, but in his excitement the young man does not feel it. Bella's danger is now imminent, for the roaring monster is within a few feet of her. Trajan leaps from the stump and with a loud outcry keeps the bull's attention fixed upon himself. The blood is pouring in a thick stream from the gashed neck. Trajan makes a rush and gets hold of the head and horns and thrusts the blade rapidly into the part of the neck where the Toreador's stroke gives the death wound. The blood follows in great gouts, but the vital point is not reached. He shakes himself clear of Trajan's feeble grasp, and half blinded by the blood and mad with anguish darts toward Bella. But Trajan has been mindful of that peril and has kept on the guard side of her. He again slips in on the beast and has him by the horns, his knife having slipped from his hands.

"You must give me a hand now, Hector, I'm nearly done for—get a handful of sand and pebbles and fling them into his eyes, while I divert him."

In the struggle man and beast have gotten to some distance from Bella. She strives to rise, but the deadly fascination of the scene chains her to the ground. Hector comes up with his hat filled with sand. Trajan makes a last desperate wrench. The animal's head is forced down and the sand flung with all Hector's strength into the flaming eyes. Trajan has relinquished his hold and flees to Bella, drags her almost to the bushes, then sinks down limp and helpless. The beast, maddened and blind, is no longer able to make out his adversaries and sinks on his knees weltering in gore. As Bella calls Hector to help Trajan, two keepers armed with ropes and stout pikes come up. They lift Trajan. He is a mass of blood, some of it his own. His vest hangs in fragments. His shirt is a dabbled rag. His right side is pierced in several places by the horns. A draught from Hector's brandy flask revives him and he asks

if the bull is gone. The keepers answer him that there is no further danger. Bella stands beside the young man in shuddering fear.

"By George, Gray," cries Hector, "you are enough to frighten any one—look at yourself—are you hurt? My God, Gray, you are badly hurt," he exclaimed, as Trajan's face grew ghastly even through the blood.

"No, I'm all right, a few flesh wounds, nothing serious" —but his limbs began to sink under him and he staggered to the famous stump and rested gasping with pain and exhaustion. The bull had meanwhile been mastered, and one of the men came forward touching his hat to Hector.

"Bring the gentleman and lady to the farm and we will do what we can."

"The gentleman can't walk—he's badly gored by the bull."

"We can carry him between us," said the man readily.

Trajan had risen and was waving his handkerchief to Edith on the other side.

"Hector, just run to the edge of the cliff and tell Miss Arden she can join us by going a distance up the path she is on. She will come to the bridge and we will wait for her there." Then he directed the man to give his attention to the lady as he was not in condition to approach her. Bella had by this time recovered in body and in mind and came forward as Trajan spoke.

"I'm sorry," he said, smiling ruefully, "that I must keep you in mind of this business—for a little while, but I will send you home by one of the farm men. I'm afraid I can't go on just yet."

He gasped this, forcing himself to make lightly of it, though he felt heavy and numb with loss of blood and pain from the gashed flesh. His clothes were torn to shreds about his body, and what was not torn was a mere clot of blood.

"You hardly need to make apologies, Mr. Gray, for your appearance—I—I—will not leave you until I see your

wounds dressed and yourself in a conveyance homeward." Then turning to the men, she said: "don't you see this gentleman is unfit to stand. Carry him gently to the farm and let us hasten." It was none too soon, for Trajan had sunk—limp and lifeless, to the ground. Bella thought the journey would never end. But in a little more than a half hour the cortège arrived at the farm-house. The blood-stained clothing was removed, Bella herself insisting on helping. The body was frightfully torn, but no deep wound could be discovered when the blood was washed away. Tender hands soothed and bound the gashes up, and under a strong dose of brandy the young man came back to consciousness. He looked surprised, and to Bella's astonishment asked, almost in a vexed tone:

"Where is Miss Arden? She was to have met us at the bridge as we came here. Hector, for God's sake go and see what has happened to her. Give me any thing you have that I can wear, I can't stand this. I must see for myself—"

"Pray be calm, Mr. Gray," pleaded Bella, startled at the vehemence of the wounded man. "No harm can happen to my cousin. The bull that attacked us was in the field by the merest accident. The keeper informs me that all the stock are locked in a double walled paddock. Besides, Edith is home by this time."

"It may be true," answered Trajan, doggedly, "but I shall be in torments until I see the poor child safe as she came from her brother's side— If you can't give me any thing to wear I will go as I am—Hurry, I implore you."

A long pelisse of a soft fabric was produced, and wrapping himself in it, Trajan dragged himself from the bed, where the kind farmer-folk had laid him. A common country cart was standing in the yard ready harnessed.

"I will come to see you again, my good friends," said Trajan, shaking the hands of the wondering farmers. "You will accompany me, will you not, Miss Briscoe—or can you stand such a rough vehicle?"

"Why, Mr. Gray, what a question—how could I leave you in such a moment?"

With the aid of the peasants the young man was bestowed painfully in the cart, but he could not maintain himself in the seat, and some blankets were stretched on the boards. Bella got on the seat beside the farmer and the vehicle shot off, Trajan heroically repressing a groan at each jolt. Bella told the man where to drive. As they neared the bridge they overtook Hector, but Bella made him a sign to say nothing, and as they passed, she bent over whispering: "Look out for Edith—we shall not stop, but hurry homeward, where I presume we shall find her."

Trajan, as Bella had discovered, was again unconscious, and if he had not been the high side-boards would have hidden Hector from view. The ride home was long, and to Bella an ordeal of the most painful character. She did not know whether it was a corpse or a live man that she was to set down at Les Charmettes. Then her mind misgave her about Edith. She had been firm in the conviction that her cousin had taken the road from the bridge homeward—it was long but not difficult. Then she shuddered as she thought the frightened girl might have made a mis-step and gone over the precipice. As they came within sight of the house a landau, which she recognized as her aunt's, came furiously toward them. Claridge was on the seat with the driver, and then Bella knew that Edith was safe. Sure enough, she with Miss McNair looked out as they heard the vehicle. Claridge leaped down and ran to the cart.

"Miss Briscoe, are you really unhurt, are you really safe? Heavens—you are covered with blood."

"Perfectly well and unhurt; I wish I could say the same for Mr. Gray," she said tremblingly—"I'm afraid he is cruelly—dangerously hurt—"

"Dangerously—Bella—what can you mean?" cried Edith, who had alighted—"Did—did the animal attack him again? He was well when I left—but where is he?" A long

moan from within the cart answered the question as Bella put her fingers to her lips. Claridge got up and looked in. His face was very grave as he leaped down.

"This is bad work—very bad work." He shook his head sadly and motioned the driver to move on. He took his place on the seat, while Bella got into the landau with the others. A stretcher was improvised from the chairs on the lawn, and the mangled form of the young man was carried through the shuddering crowd of guests and servants into the house, up the stairs, and laid upon his own bed.

"Oh, my darling," sobbed Mrs. Briscoe, as she clung to Bella, "what you have suffered; what a Providence!"

"Yes, mamma—think rather of that young hero—in the agony of death, and all through my folly."

"What do you mean, Bella—through your folly?—It was not your fault that the beast attacked you, and any man would have done as much—"

"Hush, mother—don't talk like that to me, or you will make me show you how wicked I am, and it's better that you shouldn't know; and as for any man doing what that man did—there was one man there before him and he didn't do it—there is not one man in ten thousand that would have attempted what Mr. Gray did, and there isn't one in ten thousand that could have succeeded, having attempted it."

"But, my child, do you see what a sight you are?" cried the mother, suddenly noticing that Bella's dress was a coat of blood and mud. Bella looked at herself and saw for the first time the marks of the combat. She was faint and sank into a chair. Her mother summoning the servants directed them to carry her to her room. It was not until she had stripped with her own hands and examined her child's body that she could convince herself that she had escaped unscathed.

"This has been an unlucky house for us so far, I tremble to think of the next disaster. Is Mr. Gray seriously hurt?

Were his wounds examined at the farm?" But Bella lay quite still in the bed and Mrs. Briscoe fancying that she was dropping to sleep, stepped softly into her own room.

CHAPTER XIX.

"HOME THEY BROUGHT HER WARRIOR DEAD."

THE disasters of the afternoon had been by Mrs. Arden's command concealed from her son. That robustious invalid, unconscious of his danger, was drinking from the intoxicating cup which Theo came every afternoon and morning to hold to his ready lips. Time had been when Elliot would have scouted the idea of receiving joy from any flacon not held in Bella's ministering hands, and he relished it all the more that the priestess was cold and coy and unready to pour out the nectar. Bella's visits to the sick-room were short and almost perfunctory. She was like all the Ardens, tender to the suffering and patient with the afflicted, but her ancient gayety responded no more to the young man's artful lurings. She replied in a soft voice and with unequivocal directness to his most teasing gibes. Elliot was a good deal puzzled, but confined to his room he could not arrive at a suggestion even of the mystery. Theo could have explained a good deal to him, but though she chattered briskly on every possible subject that might divert him, Bella's name was never mentioned between them. He had brought up Trajan often and his growing tenderness for his *protégé* was not diminished when she interposed with hearty emphasis:

"Trajan Gray is the noblest nature in the whole world."

The yellow sunlight was lingering in great plashes on the floor when Edith, too restless to remain in her own room, came to her brother's. Theo, who was reading Maggie Tulliver's enforced flight with Philip from "The Mill on

the Floss," closed the book as Edith sat down beside her brother.

"Did you have a long walk, Neddy?" a name Elliot called her when fraternally tender—"you look frightfully used up—why you must have walked to Romain!" he exclaimed, as he drew her head down and looked closely at her; "and you have been crying—your eyes are red—yes—I knew it, you are in a fever—what does this mean!"

"Yes, I have walked a great distance, and I do feel a little tired," she said, resolutely restraining her tears.

Elliot was alarmed. He knew his sister so well that the signs in her face warned him there was something serious. He rang the bell.

"I am going to send for mother, and you must go and lie down."

"Yes, I think I will," stammered the poor child, and she got up quietly and left the room.

"You may be sure something has gone wrong," said Elliot, as Theo looked dreamily out of the window, making a peculiarly charming picture framed in the sun rays that fell on her dark complexion.

"It is quite sinful for me to dawdle here," she rejoined with a bewitching smile, as she arose to go.

"It's never wrong to comfort the afflicted," answered Elliot. "I should like to have my ribs broken every month if it brought me the same consolation."

"Consolations, like afflictions, never come alone," retorted Theo, as her eye wandered to the nurse preparing a bolus for the wounded hero.

Elliot did not quite comprehend this epigram, but laughed as the speaker bade him *au revoir*.

Edith had quit Elliot determined to go to her room and lie down. As she came into the hall, she saw the doctor outside Trajan's door giving instructions to his assistant. She hurried forward and laid her hand on his arm. He was a Frenchman, and to the end gallant. He would have sus-

pended a surgical operation to pay a compliment. His keen black eyes beamed softly as the pretty girl looked appealingly in his face.

"Doctor," she stammered piteously, "are you afraid—do you think—is there any danger?"

There are but two conjunctures when a Frenchman feels bound to tell the truth: when it will injure a rival and swell his own importance. In this case the vanity of the man overcame the prudence of the practitioner. Taking the young girl's hand, and soaring with unutterable importance as an oracle *en titre*, he said almost jauntily: "Mademoiselle —I don't permit myself to think. I am unable to judge and I have telegraphed to Paris for a specialist—but I would not be bold enough to even guess at the result—Ah—" as these dreadful words left his lips, he repented his imprudence, for if he had not caught her the girl would have fallen to the floor.

"What is it, doctor—what ails Miss Arden?" asked Theo in surprise, coming up at this moment. Before the doctor could reply, Mrs. Arden came out of Trajan's room, and seeing Edith supported by the physician darted forward:

"Edith—Edith—what has happened? Edith, my child, speak to me!"

The doctor said hastily: "I was imprudent enough to answer her question about the invalid and she swooned"—

"I'm surprised, doctor, that an experienced medical man should answer questions like these from young girls—"

"In Heaven's name, Mrs. Arden, who is hurt now?" asked Theo breathlessly. Edith straightened herself suddenly and looking in the questioner's face said almost harshly, "Trajan Gray is in there on his deathbed." Theo looked at the doctor, looked at Mrs. Arden. A ghastly hue replaced the rich brown of her cheek.

"Ah—no—no—don't say—don't say he has killed himself—oh—my God—my God, don't say it?" She staggered against the wall—where the doctor, mystified, caught

and supported her. She broke from him and confronting Edith who stood shocked and amazed—leaning on her mother—whispered hoarsely: "Did he kill himself—or —or—" but her voice died away in a gasp.

"Mademoiselle," said the doctor in astonishment, "Mr. Gray is severely gored by a bull—how dangerous the wound is cannot be known until my confrère comes from Paris. Madame Arden, your daughter's nerves are unstrung from the adventures of the day. She should be in bed and carefully tended. I shall be back after I have obtained some lint, and either myself or confrère will remain during the night. Mr. Gray cannot be left a moment unguarded." He bowed and entered the sick room. As he disappeared Mrs. Arden turned to Theo and briefly recounted the events of the afternoon, and then supporting Edith went to her own chamber. Theo stood perfectly still in the same spot. The ashen color deepened on her face. Her eyes softened to humidity, and as they softened changed from the greenish-yellow to dark gray. She leaned against the wall as if quite lost to all surroundings. Here Clare found her a minute later as she returned from a visit to the Grovels.

"Good heavens, Theo, what has happened? Come with me!" She took the unresisting arm and led her sister along the wide hall to their apartment, and when the door was closed led her, still unresisting, to the divan in the alcove window. "Mon Dieu, Theo, you look like death. Have you been in a faint? Do speak to me. You'll drive me wild with that frightful look!"

"Trajan Gray is lying in his room dying—perhaps dead, and I drove him to it!"

"Oh, Theo, Theo, I implored you to spare him. I implored you to let him know from the first. The punishment is come and we deserve it—that is the bitterness, Theo, we deserve it. When did this happen?"

Theo told the story as she had heard it in a hard, husky voice—but never the sign of a tear.

Clare breathed a great sigh of relief—"I don't see how you are in the remotest way responsible for Trajan's hurt, Theo; I was afraid it was something of another sort. It looks as if he were in love with Bella. That's the most reasonable view of the matter."

Theo looked at Clare with a flash of incredulous scorn, which changed into a smile of dreadful contempt. Then she said, "Trajan Gray is not the sort of man that forgets his love in a day."

Clare staggered as if she had been struck. Struck she was, poor thing, by a weapon so terrible that none but a woman and sister could have used it. She sank on a chair and covered her face with her hands.

Theo was kneeling at her feet in an instant, kissing her hands and pleading to be forgiven.

"I didn't know what I said, Clare; oh Clare, forgive me —forgive the hateful words. I did not mean, oh I implore you in our mother's name to believe me—I had no idea of what I was saying, or the meaning of it when I said it—upon my soul, Clare. I would not, could not have been so cruel—for whom have I to love if not you?" and she kissed the poor hands that covered the stricken sister's face. Clare did not remove her hands, but said tenderly and sweetly, "I believe you, Theo, let us say no more about it. I am stupidly sensitive. There, dear," and she bent over and kissed the penitent head. The younger rose hastily from her kneeling posture and Clare shrank into the embrasure of the window as a knock was heard at the door. Theo. opened it and Jules stood before her.

"What is this I hear about Gray?" he asked, panting. "One of the Arden servants told us he had been gored to death by a bull. I saw no one as I came in and come to you for news." Theo told all she knew.

"A plucky fight," he said scrutinizing his sister. "Where's Clare? Oh, there you are. I suppose this has upset the house again."

"Yes, Mrs. Arden is broken down. She thinks the château is ruled by an evil fate, and I declare it looks like it," added Theo, resuming her old tone, "though I have quite forgotten my hurt arm. Are you going to stay to dinner?" she said, giving Jules a significant look.

"No. I will come over immediately after. I imagine the less intrusion upon the family now the better. I must go to Paris to-morrow!" As he passed out he met Hector, in traveling costume, coming down the hall.

"Are you off, Hector; what's up?"

"I have received a telegram from my paper, directing me to study the German war preparations. I am off on the next train. What a house this is for misfortunes! How is Gray?"

"I didn't see him, but I judge from my sister's report that there is small hope. You were present at the attack?"

"Yes," the young man answered, rather restively. "I never witnessed such nerve. There isn't a bull fighter in Andalusia would have dared seize that brute as Gray did —I own I was helpless—but if I had had all my wits about me I should have lost them in watching his fight. It was superb—I'm going to write it out for my journal—"

"Substituting yourself for the hero, of course," insinuated Jules blandly—"*au revoir*," and before the indignant scribe could fashion a rejoinder he was gone. A servant at the same time approached Hector, saying:

"Monsieur Arden requests that you will take the trouble to come to his bedside."

On entering, Elliot looked surprised at seeing Hector in his traveling suit.

"Why, Hector, you're not tired of us, are you? Can't the rest of the company make the time pass while I'm pulling myself together?"

Hector explained about his journalistic mission, and then added: "I should like to stay until Gray's case is decided, but Claridge has promised to telegraph me—"

Then as Elliot's wide-open eyes and astonished expression struck him he stopped abruptly.

"What do you mean by Gray's case? Has any thing happened him? Where is he?" and the young man started to arise.

"Stay, Arden—you are not fit to move and, above all, you are not in a condition to see what may be over there," pointing to Trajan's room. "They have thought best, I see, not to let you know of the disaster, but further concealment is useless. Lie down quietly, and I will tell you every detail."

It was not without a species of subdued enjoyment that the journalist rehearsed the events of the afternoon, doing unstinted justice to all the actors, it must be owned, and, though softening his own part, leaving no doubt of the fatal termination to Bella had Trajan not appeared so opportunely.

"And why did they keep this from me? Why did they—Please pull that bell cord. I can't of course ask you to stay, Hector—the place seems fatal—good-by."

The servant entered as Hector answered this farewell.

"Where is my mother, Pierre?"

"Madame is in her chamber, with mademoiselle, your sister."

"Very well, get François to help you to take me over to Mr. Gray's room."

The two strong men carried the chair down the long corridor and entered Trajan's room unannounced. The doctor was busied over the wounded man, whose form was stretched out nearly naked on an oiled silk sheet, spread upon an operating table. The blood had been washed from the body. There were many wounds, most of them stanched with morsels of cotton. The left arm seemed torn into shreds, one of the assistants holding it, while the doctor operated slowly. Trajan's head rested on an air pillow. His eyes were closed, and his breathing was scarcely perceptible. The entrance of Elliot was not remarked by the physician,

and waving the servants from the room he sat quite still, watching the terrible spectacle. The blood-stained clothes lay in a basket beside the table. Elliot shuddered and uttered a groan. The doctor looked around and asked in astonishment:

"Why do you come here, Monsieur Arden? this is no place for you, you can do your friend no good."

"Don't mind me, Doctor," groaned Elliot; "I should go mad if I were any where else. Continue with your work, and don't mind me. I shall not leave this room until he is saved—or lost."

The doctor shrugged his shoulders and resumed his work.

"We were obliged to take him from the bed, as he would have smothered there. Some of the wounds are under the arm and near the back, and until they are dressed he can not be replaced in the bed," explained the doctor, keeping on with his work. "I am treating him with a carbolic preparation which is a strong healing agency as well as an antiseptic. It has achieved miracles in the military hospitals, and I base all my hopes on it."

Hours passed. Elliot thought with a sickening sense of despair that the awful work would never end. When it was done, there were little patches of cotton from the breast to the calf of the left leg. The victim was under an anæsthetic and gave no sign of life save a gentle and nearly regular breathing. The body was wrapped in a thin fabric impregnated with oil of tar and laid on the bed. Then the physician, charging his aid with the regimen to follow, prepared to go to dinner, and on Elliot's invitation consented to dine at Les Charmettes. When he returned his confrère, the great Paris surgeon, came with him. He examined the invalid with eyes, ears and hands. Indeed, taking off his waistcoat, he raised the body and held it against his own breast for five minutes, listening intently. The examination lasted an hour. Then the great man retired to the dressing-room with the Crécy practitioner, and the door was closed

behind them. The consultation lasted an age, as it seemed to Elliot, but it was only twenty minutes that had passed when they returned. The surgeon was to remain all night, the house doctor informed Elliot, and would beg a bed to be placed in the dressing-room. Elliot looked the question he dared not ask, and the Paris surgeon, with that simplicity which a real man of science deals in, answered gravely:

"I won't conceal from you that the case is a bad one. There is, however, in all the wounds but one that seems dangerous. The horn in one place entered from the rear of the left side, but whether it penetrated deep enough and high enough to dislocate the vertebræ, I am not yet sure. If it has we shall have to fight death tooth and nail, with only one chance in three."

"Thank you, sir. We will take that chance hopefully under such a guide as you. I have rung for my mother. You will please consider every thing in this house at your command."

The surgeon bowed. Mrs. Arden entered as he said:

"My needs are very few, and until the crisis is past I shall know no one and see no one."

Elliot made a gesture as he saw his mother's alarmed look fixed on him.

"Have my bed made in here, mother. I am going to stay here for the present."

Mrs. Arden saw the futility of arguing the matter, merely reminding him that it was hazardous both for Trajan and himself, since, of course, where Elliot was, his sister and mother must be, most of the time.

The night wore away, and the invalid was no worse. A day, two days, three days—a week, and still nothing decisive. On the eighth day, the Paris surgeon, who could only spare time to come out every three days, announced that the crisis was at hand. The succeeding twenty-four hours would decide between life and death.

Trajan had not been permitted to speak, and the cords

of his body, recovering slowly from laceration and displacement, made it impossible to turn his head on the pillow. His mind had wandered at intervals, and Elliot heard his own name murmured fondly in the sick man's dreams. There was now to be a painful operation, and Elliot was banished to the dressing-room. It lasted many hours, and there were heart-rending groans that told the story of suffering. The great surgeon came into the little room, but Elliot dared not look in his face.

"*Eh bien*," he said, kindly, putting his hands on the young man's shoulder, "your friend will have a few days more of pain, and then the end."

"He will die," gasped Elliot.

"No, he will live."

Let us draw a veil over the impulsive boy rising and embracing the kind surgeon and flying into the next room to tell the great news to his mother, and Edith, and Bella when they had been hastily summoned.

As the kind surgeon had said, so it was. Trajan mended to the "sight of the eye," as the Crécy doctor expressed it. He raved deliriously at intervals, and upon such occasions no one but Elliot remained to hear the revelations of the distressed heart. Elliot never told what these revelations were, but he looked curiously at Edith as she hovered about the sick-bed and smiled benignantly to himself.

Naturally, the last blow had sent the company away. Kate McNair, on Mrs. Arden's earnest urging, remained, and was looked upon as one of the family. The young vicomte had accepted Mrs. Grovel's hospitable bidding to the Duclos château, where the Englishman, Claridge, gladly transferred himself. Belcour had gone back to Paris, declaring it a crime to make merry while his dear Elliot and Gray were *désolé*, and, as he afterward expressed it, "gone down to the porch of Hades with their hands on the bell-pull."

Theo, denied her *têtes-à-têtes* with Elliot, had withdrawn to the Grovels', carrying Clare with her. She came over daily

to inquire for the invalids, and sometimes succeeded, on one pretext or another, in seeing Elliot. He was distraught and in no mood for the gentle passion his charming friend was slowly feeding. When the crisis had passed, however, he became more sociable and frequently found his way over to the Grovels', where he encountered a house full of the longest possible titles and the most eccentric manners. Lafayette's interest in Clare had grown steadily. He was unaccountably fond of being with her, as Theo told Jules, laughing, mostly because Clare let him do all the talking, and there was no joy to him dearer than that. The like of the display made by the Grovels had never been seen in Crécy.

The fame of their hunts in my Lord Baron Rothschild's demesnes extended to Meaux and even Paris, where the *Chroniques* set forth the affluence of their good friend Lafayette in the piquant phrases achievable only in the French tongue by a clever pen. *Figaro* from the notes of the shifty Hector, published a brilliant romance of the encounter with the bull, in which the modest Boston journalist figured as an intrepid champion of beauty in distress and poor Trajan as a sort of sword-bearer to the redoubtable knight. Trajan found this exhilarating narrative long afterward waiting for him in the Rue Dragon and laughed heartily at the handiwork of his compatriot. And so the old order of things resumed itself insensibly in the two châteaux where the reader is for the time being guest,—alternating between one and the other and watching the little drama as it develops its plots and brings on its personages. While Trajan is *hors du combat* the sagacious reader prefers the grand company of the Grovels, where he is sure of fun and movement, and where he can keep an eye on that captivating witch Theo, whose *quartier général* is fixed in the grandest chamber of the château.

It is the artful Theo who, after an interview of amusing frankness with her venerable kinswoman, prevails upon Mrs. Grovel to write inviting Phœbe and her

mother to visit the Château Duclos. She explains to Jules that the big guardsman refuses to remain unless some *parti* is furnished to "make it worth his while." The Draytons are not rich as Americans would consider it, but to our dear kinsfolk their $15,000 income is a fortune almost fabulous, and Antoine will be very comfortable on $5,000 of it per annum. So you must lend him a hand with Phœbe, who probably has her mother's weakness for titles; and now that Trajan is recovering you must renew your siege with Bella."

Jules doesn't know what to make of that singular girl. Sometimes he is sure she is half won and he tries a bit of tenderness, when she laughs at him and with a droll look turns the talk to something ludicrous. He half believes she is a jilt and trifling with him for her own amusement. She has Claridge and Bellechasse in a fever of devotion, and Jules inclines to think she is after the Bellechasse dukedom, as the vicomte will inherit it when his worn out brother dies, as he must soon.

"But Bella doesn't know of that. How should she?"

"I'm not so sure. That's the only mistake, Jack, you make in all your combinations—you never concede as much craft to your adversaries as you have yourself. My experience teaches me that every one has a certain measure of craft in his or her kind, and I've yet to see the marriageable girls that don't know a good deal more of the fellows that dangle about them than the fellows suspect."

"Well, Mr. Moralist, we've got the summer before us, and when the harvest comes if we haven't gathered the crop it will be our own fault. I expect every day to have Clare announce that Lafayette has offered himself."

CHAPTER XX.

THE AMBER ELVES.

IT is, after all, a glad world or a sad one as we please to regard it. The physical depression that a gloomy day induces is changed to delightful transport when we force our own resources to come to our aid. We may imagine that life would become intolerable in the six months' night of the North or the sempiternal mists of the mountains, did we not know that the people of these regions pine in the more equable seasons of other lands! The favored races of Southern Europe are prone to all the depressions of bleaker climes. Naples, the seat of eternal sunshine, contributes to the roll of the hapless in proportion to London suffused with the debilitating moisture of perpetual fog. It is, indeed, in ourselves and not in our stars, oh, my brother, that the magnet of all our destinies works its mysterious attractions and repulsions. In the mineral itself lives the fire that sharp concussion evokes—latent, unconsumable, but always native. We build ourselves lordly pleasure houses, but the festal tokens must come from ourselves.

It was with reflections of this agreeably trite sort that Trajan passed into the easier stages of convalescence. His wounds had healed with surprising rapidity. It was only the lacerated arm and the gash in the side that held him in bed. These the physician declared would give him no trouble in a month. It was the wonderful carbolic remedy that had worked the miracle, and the delighted Æsculapius was embalming the events in a profound exposition to be added to the *causes célèbres* in the archives of the Academy of Science. Elliot was disposed to impatience with the enthusiastic specialist, but Trajan tolerated his vagaries with the humility of an acolyte, and gravely subscribed to his reclamations. His sick room had become the rendezvous of the family. Elliot, whose wounds

were entirely healed, was the first to salute him in the morning and the last to leave him at night. Mrs. Briscoe lavished on him the maternal devotion that a darling son alone could expect.

The family owed Bella's life to him and she thought no recompense could pay that debt. As Trajan became strong enough to sit propped up in bed he insisted that the drawing lessons should be resumed, as he felt equal to instructing his pupils from that point of vantage. Elliot in arranging the sketches in Trajan's portfolio came across the head of Edith, begun long before. His sister was looking over his shoulder as he laughed softly and looked into her eyes. A blush prayed him not to jest over the discovery, and the sketch was softly restored to its place. Theo came over every day or wrote polite notes of inquiry—but for some reason none of her messages were ever delivered to the sick man unless entrusted to Elliot—when Trajan listened with impressive unconcern. One morning Edith came into the room with a bunch of lovely wood violets, lilies of the valley, and fox-glove arranged in a pretty vase. Theo had sent them to the invalid. He never even looked at them. A few minutes afterward Elliot left the room and the nurse was in the dressing chamber; Trajan seized the moment to say:

"Miss Arden, will you do me a great favor?—will you wrap your hand in a towel and fling those flowers out of the window? I shall smother if they remain in the room."

"I must humor a sick man's fancy, of course," said the maiden gayly, gratifying the strange whim to the letter, and then cheerfully resumed her sketching. There is no telling how far she could have carried her discretion in refraining from the subject had Bella not opportunely come in with her mother. Trajan's whimsical request was never afterward, or not until long afterward, alluded to, but the doctor that day forbade flowers in the sick room, omitting to mention that it was by the sick man's request! Elliot had resumed his rides with Theo, the first pretext being the young strat-

egist's desire to see the field of Trajan's exploit. Edith reluctantly accompanied them, but not till Bella consented to go also. Greatly to Elliot's vexation and Theo's no small discomfiture, the Vicomte Bellechasse and Claridge, hearing of the proposed tour, invited themselves to escort the ladies. There were no traces of the struggle on the scene.

The stump bore evidences of the young man's boot heels, but the soft grass was green and unstained and the plowed field innocent of a reminder of the blood shed that exciting day. The water-pipe, too, had been repaired, and some of the ropes serving the workmen were still suspended across the chasm. "And Trajan crossed on that thing?" asked Elliot incredulously, as Edith pointed out where the cries of Bella had surprised them on the opposite bank. It was a five-inch gas pipe, such as are used for mains in the smaller towns, and jointed in thick sockets. "That sort of pipe is much stronger than you would imagine," said the Vicomte. "I have often seen workmen make use of it, as Gray did, when bridging streams. It requires great skill in the passage—but otherwise there is no unusual danger."

"I'll lay you a hundred pounds you can't find a workman in the whole of France that would undertake that passage to the other side," interposed Claridge.

"I will undertake it myself on that bet," said the intrepid Frenchman taking off his coat.

The ladies grew pale and frightened and looked at the young men appealingly. Elliot, laughing, reminded the antagonists that the international rancor between Gaul and Briton was not quite in place under the circumstances.

"I don't doubt a moment, my dear Bellechasse, that you would do it; who ever heard of a Frenchman that wouldn't dare the devil; or a Briton," he added diplomatically, "that would not face him?"

The antagonists were mollified, and it was proposed to descend the ravine to the Spring of the Faithful, which all the party had heard of, but none had ever seen. The

vicomte was sure he could find it, he had come to it once from the valley road, but there had been a freshet and the entrance to Revêche was flooded. Curiously enough, Edith heard the proposal without volunteering a word about her knowledge of its whereabouts. When the party reached the valley road, they were just to the left of the mouth of the ravine and Edith recollected the place at once. She said nothing, however, and the vicomte led the party to the opening, where all dismounted and set out for the spring. It was not difficult to find, the path up the side of the gorge passing it within a hundred yards from the mouth. But the late rains had made the path impracticable for the ladies.

The spring itself was a boiling caldron of yellow muddy water, and the pilgrims were forced to postpone their pledges until the place was accessible. Edith felt guilty at the sense of relief that came upon her when this was told. She vaguely felt that certain hands in the mysterious pool would be a sort of sacrilege, and I am forced to make known, that upon her own confession afterward made to a certain person whose fortunes I hope the reader is interested in, she would have remorselessly closed up the fountain if she could have managed it. I can't account for this strong antipathy on the part of this charming girl. She was by far the sweetest nature in the Arden family. Certainly she could not have objected to Elliot, or Bella, or even the good-natured Vicomte, or Claridge, for she afterward made much of the latter two, and her devotion to Bella and Elliot—is it not a legend in the family?

One day, however, later on, riding alone, Theo and Elliot, scouring the valley, passed the ravine and the young man was reminded of the well. They dismounted and climbed the dim cathedral aisle to the bosky shrine. The spring had receded to its normal surface. A melancholy cat-bird sent forth its plaintive refrain in the thick shade above. The daylight fell soft and soothing on the eye; slanting banners of gold falling through the opening in the branches above

as the sun passed to the west, toward the misty head of the ravine.

"What a scene of dreamy restfulness and divine aspiration!" cried Theo, drawing a long breath of sensuous content. "I could write a poem here, or say a prayer of real devotion, or do any thing that implies soul, conscience, truth." She said this for the moment forgetting her companion, whose eyes were turned upon her in mute questioning.

"That's the very sentiment," he said softly, "for the vow of fidelity. It's the God of the fountain that inspires his devotees before they pledge at his altar—come, let us receive this sense of absolution as the sign that we are purged for the sacrament."

They kneeled down. The words of the vow were not easily made out, and Elliot held the drooping tresses of green suspended to familiarize himself with the faded characters.

"'By the heart that's true in love,'" he spelled out—when a scream interrupted him. Theo had started back and risen from her knees.

Her eyes dilating with horror were fixed on the inner edge of the spring. Elliot followed the glance—a large black serpent of the species the French call *couleuvre à collier* or water adder, hung from the thick clusters of vines, the yellow scales of his belly reflected like amber orbs in the brackish waters of the pool. Theo and Elliot stood transfixed with a sort of fascination. The amber eyes in the pool multiplied until the little basin seemed a caldron of dancing demons, glaring with strange menacing contortions. Picking up a stone, Elliot flung it at the serpent's body coiled in the mosses. The reptile thrust out its forked tongue and disappeared in the bank. The water resumed its somber brackish hue—the amber fiends had fled.

"Ugh!" shuddered Theo, "I wouldn't put my hand in that water for the keys of Peter. The sight of a snake makes me quake for an hour."

"It must be an Egyptian spirit that presides here," said

Elliot, no more inclined than his companion to trust himself in the vicinage of the serpent. "You know the snake was the Egyptian symbol of eternity, and I dare say the reptile is harmless, but I own I should be a sad worshiper if the rites of the Nile were in vogue."

Edith and Bella were in the room when Elliot recounted this episode to the invalid, laughing over his own discomfiture. Edith's eyes met Trajan's at the climax, but neither made any comment. Mrs. Arden innocently asked why Mr. Gray had not mentioned this curious spring among the other wonders of Crécy, but Edith parried the question for him by asking Elliot if Theo was coming to dinner as she had heard him say something about expecting her and Jules.

All further embarrassment on the subject was put out of mind by great and momentous news. Jules who had been in Paris for some days came in to tell that war was about to be declared. The Prussians were ready at every point. Bismarck had instructed the king to take the high hand with France and force a declaration. The ridiculous booby and voluptuary, the prince of Hohenzollern, had pretended to resign his individual candidature to the throne of Spain only to have it come back later at the hands of the head of the House, the King of Prussia. The Emperor had very naturally objected to permitting France to be placed between two Prussian princes, menacing the empire from the Pyrenees and the Rhine. The King of Prussia was to be asked to categorically forbid any member of his family from accepting the throne of Spain. If he refused, war would be declared at once. Paris was even indignant that the Emperor waited for the final word from Prussia. The cafés were aflame with patriotic placards. Thousands were marching through the streets howling for war and the march to Berlin; Count Benedetti was with Bismarck and the king at Ems, and the answer to the French note was expected every day. This exciting topic was under discussion at the dinner table when Theo came in. She had run over to announce the arrival

of Mrs. Grovel's *pièce de résistance*, the Prince d'Amboise, Duke de Charlroi, one of the greatest noblemen in France, a descendant of the Valois kings, master of a dozen châteaux, and though generally a little pinched for money to meet his princely extravagances, owner of immense wealth.

"I suppose he's brought to console Amanda for the loss of her count," said the satirical Miss McNair.

"Indeed the prince might do a great deal worse than marry the sentimental Amanda," retorted Jules. "She is quite as fine looking as the Princess Pierre Bonaparte, and has a million-fold her advantages otherwise."

"She's not so good a milliner, I imagine," said the persistent Scot, "and wouldn't be so frugal if the prince should ever meet the fate of his grandfather and be driven to playing the fiddle, or teaching dancing for his daily bread, as I've heard said his grandfather did in Leicester square, in London!"

"Oh, the princes are part of the people in France now, Miss Kate, and have come to stay," said Jules oracularly.

"So those scamps, the Comtes d'Artois and Provence, told us when they came back under cover of British bayonets and Prussian huzzars, and yet we saw one of them live long enough to sneak away with his handbag stuffed with stolen treasure like any other thief caught in honest men's houses."

Kate was a vehement democrat and hated kings and their surroundings with a hatred that would bear advantageous comparison with her stout ancestor Knox, of whom in her expansive moments she was fond of prattling. She had the picture of him denouncing that wicked beauty Mary Stuart, hung over her bed in Paris, and the malicious hinted that she performed her orisons to that historic group whenever her hatred of aristocracy seemed to be relaxing. Jules went on to tell how the prince had arrived in imposing state. Outriders had dashed in advance to announce his coming. An army of retainers formed his suite. His secretary was a vicomte and his equerry a gentleman of family. Mrs.

Grovel was quitè overwhelmed—but this Jules did not mention, with the state of her guest, and she piteously relegated to Theo the office of receiving and caring for the awe-inspiring personage. That self-possessed young person was quite equal to the task. It was she who had lured him to Crécy. She had her uses for the great man, known only to herself. She had been of service to him at court. She had made his peace with the Empress after one of his most scandalous backslidings; she had even put him in the way of raising money on a day of sore need. The prince kissed her pretty hand as she welcomed him in the great *salon*, and presented him to the trembling family and awestruck guests.

"What a witch you are!" the prince whispered as she led him to the foot of the grand stairs where the grave domestics waited to show him to his apartments. "You ought to be a princess?"

"Perhaps I shall be," and she flashed an enchanting defiance at him as he bent in courtly recognition to the admiring circle. He shook with laughter as he passed through the corridor, and the domestics thought him a very humorous and affable prince. He had come for three days only, on the second of which the long-planned and once-deferred *fête champêtre* was to be given. The Baroness and Baron Rothschild were to come the next day from Férrières.

Theo's Paris connections had been potent even there, for the great banker was negotiating with Grovels' mining companies for an investment in the silver shafts. The prince was taken over to call in state on the Ardens. He had met Elliot at the American minister's, but didn't recollect him, for coming upon him a few evenings later at the opera he passed him without a sign. Theo. bore warm invitations for Mrs. Arden, her sister, daughter and Bella to join the prince at dinner, but they all declined save Bella, who accepted with evident pleasure. When they set out to return, the prince asked Theo's permission to dismiss the phaeton and walk. He was full of polite attention to Miss Briscoe, and at

the dinner, on Theo's suggestion, was placed between herself and the favored American. Bella's late constraint wore off as the dinner went on and the prince confided to Theo that she was the most charming creature he had ever met—a Poictiers—a Ninon—in short an Olympian divinity.

"Take care, monseigneur—mademoiselle would not feel flattered by such comparisons. She doesn't understand your persiflage and cynical raillery as I do—furthermore, she is *fiancée*," said Theo, as a diversion at Bella's right gave her the prince's ear.

"*Fiancée* is not *mariée*," he returned, "and until a young woman has reached that deplorable *cachot* she is the guerdon of every knight's prowess."

Bella's conquest of the prince was marked by every one, but the fact did not seem to inspire any jealous heart-burning in the self-poised little *intriguante;* possibly she had some occult means of divining the nobleman's insincerity, or recognized his florid attentions as the caprice of the gallant French nature. She rather seemed to favor his pursuit of the young Diana. She even informed him meaningly, that as she was obliged to go to Paris presently she committed him to the care of her rival and felt sure that he would not find the time heavy on his hands.

The fête that had occupied the minds of the Duclos château was a memorable event at Crécy. Never had the simple bourgeois of that retired corner seen any thing so magnificent. Even the imperial reception of the year before at Férrières, afforded no such spectacle of lights, equipages, and music. The gardens of the château were like the Champs Élysée concerts, when the great Pas de Loup played those excruciating pieces of Monsieur Wagner.

The ominous rumors filling Paris and the imminence of war threw a shade of uncertainty upon the attendance of her most cherished guests that distracted the expectant Mrs. Grovel. Even those in the house were uncertain of remain-

ing the day out. The Vicomte de Bellechasse and the big Antoine were in hourly expectation of orders to join their regiments. The uncertainty of the crisis kept many away—but the fame of the Montana millionaire's princely cheer held most of those expected faithful. Lord Lyons sent his regrets by his first secretary, Lord Beaufoy, who made a very imposing substitute and danced every set. When the festival began at noon, however, the list of guests would have satisfied the most exacting hostess. It was indeed, as *Figaro* politely said, the affair of the season and graced by all who were known to the *haut ton* of Parisian society—an acknowledgment which gave untold satisfaction to the gratified Grovels. The Countess and Annette de Bellechasse, with the Marquise Jumelle, came early in the afternoon—more, I suspect, in deference to the solicitation of the young vicomte than to gratify themselves or Theo.

Crécy was *en fête* with so much movement. Two orchestras imported from Paris were lodged in the Aigle d'Or and the Tête Noir, and gathered the townsfolk and peasants from far and near playing in the château grounds. Baron Rothschild and his baroness arrived at noon, when the open air fête was well under way and the younger guests were battling in croquet, billiards, lawn tennis and green-sward diversions. Mrs. Grovel had gone at the last moment to charge Mrs. Arden and her family not to desert her in the crisis of her glory. Though in no humor for festivity the family promised to be present. Elliot, Bella and Edith went early in the afternoon, and Philip, who had returned on his way to Châlons, promised to take Mrs. Arden and Mrs. Briscoe in the evening. He had learned that Clare was not to attend.

On the fête itself, the wonders of its *mise en scène*, I shall not linger. Were not the glories and the names duly recorded in the *Colony Court Circular* the following week, and were there not bales of the issue as big as dry goods boxes ordered by the ravished family and all whose names were

printed and sent to the American *Court* journals, which, as every one who is in society knows, are to be found in all the refined communities of our glorious land of equality and Spartan democracy. We may glance in at a few of the episodes of the great fête, which were not without their influence upon subsequent events, but as we are not invited, this shall be done in the most unobtrusive fashion, for Mrs. Grovel at this stage of her social education had not learned that charming device of her compeers in America. She did not know that a facile pen might be secured to record her costumes and give lists of guests, prices, decorations and what not, by thoughtfully providing each of the enterprising journals of her vicinage with a little note of invitation, inclosing all these details, to relieve the perplexed editor!

It is far beyond my poor powers to embalm the fabulous beauty of the gowns worn by the various great dames, the jewels and feathers and innumerable artifices of costume, whose secret was in those days only known to Paris; those are far too delicate for the masculine pen, and as they after all are but the merest glints on the chain whose links are forging under the reader's eyes, what use suspending the bellows or arresting the hammer that would only give the metal time to cool from the white heat necessary to shape all the links uniformly? For the Vulcan at the literary anvil must fashion his ore into shape while it is malleable, else his handiwork may as well come from the molds, whereout issue the forms that are to life as the chromo to the oil painting or the plaster galvanized façade to the work of the chisel!

So you are to figure to yourself the dukes, counts, marquises, barons, duchesses, countesses, baronnes, et cetera, et cetera—in such garments as lavish wealth and irreproachable taste suggest. The prince had graciously decorated his manly bosom with the jewels and ribbons of his great orders and glistened like a knight in armor as the Venetian lights, hung in scores on the branches, shone upon

him. To the lay judgment of the masculine guests, Bella was the princess of the fête. Her robe of fleecy silken laces and China crêpe sat as lightly on her pliant figure as spring frost upon branches of willow. A sparkling aigrette of priceless diamonds held up the folds of the lace overskirt at the point of the corsage. The Prince d'Amboise hardly gave the other swains a chance to approach this divine being, and set down his name on her card for the three waltzes she had determined to confine herself to.

Theo, though not so richly dressed, was a work of ravishing art in the neutral tints she best knew how to combine. She moved among the guests, gathering thrones in her conquering glances. Elliot had never realized her beauty as he did at that moment in the inebriating evidences of her conquest. Indeed, I have said that Theo was not a beautiful woman. Her features were irregular. Her skin olive and her mouth mobile, but indeterminate. Good humor and piquant mirth played upon her round face as ripples upon the sunny surface of a pool. The green gray eyes softened to limpid brown; the brown changing into the iridescent hues of the cloud that veils the cascade rainbow. Her plump round hands thrust their bewitching shapeliness into her talk, her laugh, her simplest movement, as is the manner of the French. Her feet matched her hands, and the trim ankles which her robe did not at all times conceal were in keeping with the rest of the figure. To all this add the incomparable sprightliness of a manner vivacious as the French, with the seductive reserve of her Anglo-Saxon sisters, and you may get something of a notion of the effect this mistress of every guileful art produced upon her contemporaries. Her gliding motion, wonderful in such short stature, suggested the leopardess, who had forsaken her wildwood instincts and showed her teeth only for the amusement of the docile lambs—if it be permissible to compare so much loveliness with so much of the terrible.

To set eyes upon her as she tripped the sensuous measure

of the "Blue Danube," resting on Elliot's stout arm, was to look again, and to look again was to lose the heart, or head, or both, to so much enchantment. Theo was far too wise for coquetry. She charmed the women as well as the men by the consummate deference of her demeanor. Despising the callow chatterers who lisped inflated compliments, not less than the hollow caresses of her own sex, she made both believe that their tributes were the breath of her joy, the food of her happiness. Where a less skillful hand would have smirked in her perfectly obvious triumphs, Theo bore it all with a meekness that deceived every body that watched the naïve comedy—unless the antipathetic Bella and Edith be excepted. But, as we know, these young women had heartburnings of their own, the fuel of which the angelic Theo was suspected to be supplying. Resplendent and conquering, Bella felt that the substantial honors of the field were the enemy's. Elliot had apparently forgotten her presence in his infatuated devotion to the sorceress. Edith, approaching him in the interval between the dances, reminded him that he had not asked his cousin for a single waltz. He looked rather vexed, if the truth must be said, and a few minutes later went up to the beauty who was sitting with the prince to make amends. Glancing at her card the tardy wight found the prince's name on all the numbers not erased.

"You haven't a waltz free, Bella?" he asked, guiltily. "May I not ask monseigneur to share an old favorite from Faust? We have not danced together in an age."

Monseigneur was *désolé* to seem selfish, but as mademoiselle had limited her dances to three he really could not bring himself to forego the pleasure. Elliot, just a shade discomfited, bowed ceremoniously and returned to his goddess. As he crossed the room Edith came up and whispered: "I am tired out, and as Pierre is just come with Mamma and Auntie I'm going home. Don't mention it to Bella." Now the pleasures of the dance had always been keenest to

Elliot when his pretty sister was on his arm, but he had not asked her once to-night and let her go without suggesting it. Plainly Theo's second move was successful as the first. She saw Edith going and she was vexed, for it wasn't her purpose to be monopolized the whole evening by her adorer. She had counted on Edith to take Elliot when she had rounded the *rôle* at the proper stage. Theo set out to find Claridge, who had been lounging in the veranda, discoursing on war and politics to the distracted Amanda. That hapless damsel, arrayed like a favorite sultana, had been strangely neglected. She adored dancing and had been asked but once during the evening by the unhappy Antoine, who had received orders to join his regiment the next day at Nancy.

Philip, to whom Edith had written, begging him to come out for the ball, as Bella would be without escort, had found the visit possible, when it was further mentioned that Clare had gone to Paris to avoid the crowd and would not return until quiet was restored. He returned to make his adieux, as he was to begin active duty on Vinoy's staff, so soon as the army was in motion. He had good-naturedly given his arm to Amanda when he saw her forlorn condition, and Theo, pretending to rally Antoine, warned him that the American would cut him out. Antoine glowered savagely at the unconscious offender, going so far as to jostle him rudely whenever he could get near enough. His prospects of capturing the Yahoo heiress, Theo had adroitly insinuated, were excellent. During the evening he was feverishly bent on making the most of the time left him, but incautiously indulging in too much champagne had been carried off by La Baronne to hide his unseemly lapse. He had begun to believe Theo that he stood well with Amanda, and cursed his fate that the long-wished-for war had come just when fortune stood with beckoning hand ready to crown his poverty with the Montana millions. So it happened that the pensive Amanda had been left to ruminate almost

unnoticed in the halls of her family grandeur and triumph. Theo's quick eye had seen all this. Hence it was that, effulgent in her demurely worn laurels, she startles Philip and the Montana maiden by drawing a chair beside them.

She hands the page a card with a penciled line to the prince and bids him hand it to the august personage in the next room with Bella. Amanda begins a glowing account of the condescensions of the great people, when Theo, spying the prince looking about in perplexity, rises and slips over to his side. She says something in a low tone. Monseigneur's eyes sparkle and he laughs consumedly, devouring his mentor with admiring glances that it was perhaps quite as well all the world could not see. He came over to the lone Amanda, deserted in this scene of parental splendor, and dropping into Philip's vacated place, protests that mademoiselle has been treating him cruelly. She has been hiding herself the whole evening, while she knew that he was coveting the pleasure of a dance. Amanda can only gasp her innocence of such turpitude, when monseigneur vows that she can only prove her sinlessness by honoring him with the next dance. Suffused with glory and blushes, Amanda signifies her readiness, and offering his arm with the ceremonious deference he would have shown the Empress, the heir of a principality and the heiress of Yahoo Gulch edify the admiring throng in the lively measures of the polka-mazourka.

The proud mother, bustling about to see that the lackeys neglected none of the great personages, caught sight of Amanda's blazing chignon bestowed upon the only available spot on the princely shoulders, free from decoration, and her heart fluttered in the ennobling sight. "Why shouldn't her 'Manda catch a prince? She was not so sightly," the proud mother admitted with a little sigh, "as Bella or Theo, but her eyes were better than that all-conquering young person's. She didn't talk so much, either, and Jep was always saying men liked women who held their tongues! 'Manda can beat a muley cow at that if she ain't a

beauty," she added in self-consolation as she watched the darling.

"Yahoo mayn't be like Rome," she said the next day, recounting to the husband of her bosom, as proud wives do, the various stages of the previous day's bliss, "all roads don't lead to the Gulch, but it gives those that know how to leave it, means of getting on every road that's worth traveling. Now own up, Jep, you never expected to see a daughter of yours whirling around in a palace that your money paid for, in the arms of a real prince!"

Jeptha, whose knowledge of the fête and ball ended with a confused bow to the guests, allowed that he hadn't "calculated" on such luck for Amanda, nor did his manner indicate that cordial sympathy in the remarkable event his wife justly counted on. He had, indeed, as the plain-spoken woman declared, stuck himself up-stairs with that "simpering old stuck-in-the-mud," the "Minister," as the American abroad is in the habit of vaguely alluding to the representative of the sovereign people, and they had occupied the whole night making a spectacle of themselves over the mysteries of that American diversion, which the Frenchmen call "le pokaire." "Come now, Jep, just own that you think I play my cards pretty well considerin'?"

But instead of seizing this proffer of ready placation, the graceless husband remarked with the indifference that has been known to excite the most docile wives, "Why, as to them princes, Meda, ef you think so much of that sort of thing, I can get you a king or two to dance 'Manda around at the next ball. They're not exactly cheap, but money'll fetch 'em every time. Why, this banker feller, Rothschild, had the Emperor and Empress out here a year ago—but it cost him a pot of gold."

Shocked by such coarse estimate of the great, and enraged by his indifference to the proudest triumph of her life, the outraged woman fell back upon her primitive weapons, tears and remonstrances, an armory that the experienced wife

never draws on in vain in such encounters: "You didn't always think me a fool—" sob, sob—

"I tell you what it is, Meda, what's the use making a fuss over such rot, there isn't a prince, or duke, or, or—" but here his command of titles ran short, "that you couldn't get to dance with a squaw in the fixins of the Gulch, or marry one either, if what they call the *dot* were big enough. 'Manda's made a show of us once already. She hasn't much sense at best. Don't go putting any more fool notions in her thick head than she's got. It's too hard getting them out, and there's enough there already. I won't knuckle down one five-cent piece to the longest name that asks to marry her. Ef she marries one o' them 'tarnal humbugs, he'll have to be satisfied with the gold in her hair, that the painter chap used to talk like a Tom-fool about."

This unfeeling taunt stopped the sobs and drew on the reminiscences:

"Jeptha Grovel, you always stood in the light of your family. Where would you be to-day, I'd like to know, ef it hadn't been for me? Shifting sand in Shawmut Run at a dollar and a half a day. Just tell me—wasn't it a due bill to me for six months' board and washing from Jim Houk that gave you a seventh interest in the Ivanhoe, and didn't you draw two million out of the lode inside a year?"

"There's no denying you're a brick, Meda, when you stick to your own tools. But among these 'beats,' don't you see they're only laughing at us? It's all the same to me ef you like the thing, so long as 'Manda isn't made a dunce of a second time."

But all this was after the ball, and unforeseen by the fond matron as she feasted her eyes on her darling's triumph. Not when she had herself opened the ball on the Baron Rothschild's arm, with the Baronne as her *vis-à-vis*, did the proud woman enjoy a more delicious thrill of rapture. It is true her joy was clouded by the obstinate refusal of Jeptha to assume his place as head of the house beside La Baronne.

Jeptha was no devotee of the gay Terpsichore. He had retired to an upper chamber where, as the Vicomte Bellechasse declared, the American Minister, a Paris banker from New York, and a silver nabob from Arizona sat as silent as conspirators, immersed in "le pokaire," a surprising "*jeu de cartes*" which did not stimulate conversation!

Amanda, silent and almost tearful in her bliss, was deposited in the arms of mamma, who rewarded the affable nobleman with such a regard of triumph as would have repaid a greater heroism. She would, I believe, have embraced the astonished prince, if Theo had not come up and given her a warning glance.

"Mademoiselle dances like a sylph," he said, bowing graciously. "I must beg the favor of one more dance, at least, before this charming *fête* comes to an end," and taking 'Manda's almost blank card, he traced characters that a thousand admiring eyes since, called upon to read, have found it difficult to construe into "D'Amboise." For in France, where bad penmanship is an art, the *noblesse* carry off all the honors in illegibility. You may see the famous scrawl on the Malachite mantel of the Grovel mansion to this day, where, framed in gold, it is cherished as the devout in Spain guard relics—known and admired by the fiercest democrat in the imperial territory of Montana. It was at this stage of the ball that the big Antoine, having slept off the excesses of the early evening, reappeared on the scene. He was savage and impatient to find Amanda, the object of the prince's adoration, and as the magnate moved off with Bella, he shrugged his shoulders significantly.

"It would make a famous match, if the prince could win such a divine creature," remarked young Bellechasse, sighing sentimentally.

"Win her," said Antoine with a savage sneer, "that proud coquette has done nothing but make fine eyes at my lord prince since he came here. She would take him on any terms."

Recognizing a kindred spirit in Clare, the children doubled their joys by inviting their big brother and the gentle, sad-eyed Clare to these sports. The two were soon on very friendly terms—indeed, Clare was more responsive in this new companionship than with Theo or Jules. She no longer saw the risible in Lafayette's rough western frowardness, or his unpolished manners. His tenderness and gayety with his young brother and sister put him on an equal footing and made these relations in some sort congenial.

Nor was Clare's tireless interest in the little folks the least of her charms to the young man. He felt, without being able to describe, a difference in her treatment of him in contrast with that of other young women whom he met. She did not hide a covert sneer or suggest ridicule in her dealings with him. Others he felt to be continually goading him on to the more fantastic impulses in his nature. Their very bearing was a challenge to him to prank and play the fool. He could no more resist the bedeviling invitation than a manikin to perform its antics when the string is pulled.

To his own surprise he began to disrelish Theo and the society of other women, and to find an inexpressible pleasure in listening to the calm, high-bred Clare prattling fairy stories to the big-eyed boy and girl, whose infantile imagination had been fed upon the legends of Yahoo Gulch and the American civil war. Robinson Crusoe and the enchanting Friday were as new to them as real, while the Arabian Nights filled their days with joy and their nights with dreams of crystal domes, magic carpets, lovely sultanas and terrible giants with curling cimeters and dazzling turbans! Nor were the tales lost on the honest Lafayette himself.

His youth and boyhood were passed among the rough miners, where fairy lore had but little vogue, and to Clare's amusement his were not the smallest of the wondering eyes that heard of this new world, the charm of childhood and its solace in after years. Marion made Clare the confidant of all his projects. He was a naturalist in a small way and

about this time his heart was set on some rare turtle eggs, that the son of the Crécy physician showed him. They came from a wonderful island in the Marne, ten or twelve miles from Crécy, Theo. had told him, and the boy was so earnest in the quest that Clare promised that he should go with Lafayette and herself some day when the heads of the mustangs were set in that direction. The maternal heart swelled with complacency as the three rode out of the park one afternoon at Theo's suggestion, after a week's rain had held every body prisoner—a sort of a summer equinoctial that often disturbs the French farmer near the great waterways of the Marne and Seine.

'Twas the omniscient Theo. who had encouraged the small Marion to seek his coveted object on the Marne Island, and it was she who suggested that the time was promising when the party set out. It was the day before the great *fête*. When at midnight no sign of the riders was seen at the Duclos château, Mrs. Grovel was by no means disturbed, as she supposed Lafe. had stopped at Les Charmettes. The next day at noon, in the glories of the *fête*, Theo. received a telegram from Paris which caused her eyes to snap with triumph.

Later, she received a note from Clare reciting how the party had gone to the island; how, as darkness fell, they had lost their boat; how, the miller being away at Meaux and the locks breaking loose, the island was inundated; how Lafayette had done all in mortal power to rescue her, and even leaped into the angry waters to swim ashore that she might not be compromised; and how, having spent the night—the three on the sloping roof of a half-submerged summer-house—they were rescued in the morning, and, arriving in Paris, were married in St. Philip du Roule by Père Barodet. It was this prodigious realization of her hopes that had filled Theo with such *aplomb* all the hours of Mrs. Grovel's feast. Great was the amazement of the Grovels when Lafayette's announcement came. Theo, of course, shared it, but skillfully concealed that the event, though

thus forced, was only anticipated. Jules looked at her curiously as she felicitated Mrs. Grovel, and retired to the grove to give vent to his emotions !

CHAPTER XXI.

PRINCE CHARMING'S WOOING.

THE prince did not quit Crécy the day after the ball as he had contemplated. He was neither warrior nor statesman, and the crisis in affairs did not concern him greatly. His House was Bourbon in sympathy, and his heart beat for France only when he thought of her legitimate sovereign, Henri V., holding his mock Court in the rollicking burg of Gratz, under the shadows of the Austrian Alps. The prince had never taken any part in the political schemes of his party. He recognized accomplished facts and mingled in the pageants of the empire as he would have attended the levees of the "Irreconcilable" Gambetta, had he been Chief of the State. He was confident that sooner or later France would come back penitently to her ancient princes, holding out piteous hands for the old manacles that the fires of 1793 had melted. Until the dawn of that returning reason, he saw no need of brooding in his château like so many of his kinsmen and compeers. He had been born to a great heritage, but until the Bourbon returned, it was for the most part titulary. Parental waste had materially lessened the revenues of his dukedom. His title of prince was from the Holy Roman empire and brought nothing material in France, where his rank was really inferior to that of the Bourbon, Orleans, and Napoleonic dukes.

Unlike the De Broglie, Rohan and Valois, he bore the princely title in preference to his ducal name, though in an assemblage of his own rank he gave precedence to a score or more titles of a creation not anterior to his own. He was

much more a man of the world than his aristocratic compatriots. He had lived in England and America and realized the potency that commercial rank gives contemporary manhood. He declared that if Henri V. were restored to the throne of his fathers, it would be through the plutocracy and not the idle dreamers of the *noblesse*, and he would have named a ministry from the great bankers and capitalists whose interests alone upheld the empire. It was the dream of the Empress to unite the prince with the heiress of some great Bonapartist Crœsus, and the young Sybarite had encouraged the notion—but had never seriously engaged in the quest. He was beyond the age of romantic attachment and meant to make marriage a finality in his ambitious projects.

He meant, however, that his princess should be equal to the great part he proposed playing, by the possession of beauty, wit, and grace, as well as the money that was essential to restore the splendors of his patrimony. Unlike most Frenchmen he dreamed of making his princess his wife and companion, rather than his banker and sultana.

He had tasted all the jading pleasures of his epoch ; he had wasted his substance on the ephemeral amours of a riotous *jeunesse*, but he had settled down to reform, not repentance, in a spirit of satiety, rather than the Prodigal's self-reproach and filial yearning. Marriage was necessary to him now to perpetuate his name and mend his fortunes, but, if he must make a choice between grace, beauty, accomplishments and mere sordid affluence without these, he was determined that his race should be perpetuated through an alliance with the former rather than the latter. He was not without education and great capacities, and he saw no reason why he should not when the time came revive the glories of a Richelieu or a Mazarin. Italian blood was part of his heritage, and the restless ambition of that subtle and pre-eminently political race sustained his more serious purposes, even when he was most immersed in the wasting excesses of his youth.

He was now thirty-five and past the turbulent impulses of the idle and irresponsible. He saw things as they were with a clear eye and unclouded understanding. Life had lost a young man's illusions. He was so impartial in estimating the men and events of his time, that he had scandalized his legitimist associates, in pronouncing Louis Bonaparte the profoundest statesman and publicist since Henri IV.

"A vain egotist, like his great uncle," he used to say, "made the mistake of marrying into a reigning house, the proudest in Europe—where his intrusion was resented as an offense. Louis, on the contrary, sagaciously took his empress from among his own rank, wounding no susceptibilities and continuing the democratic character of his *régime*. His choice of Eugénie, French by descent and Bonapartist by tradition, was the master-stroke of his reign." He vaguely counted on something of the same sort in his own scheme of marriage.

It was the knowledge of this that dictated Theo's conduct. She knew that the reflective and ambitious prince was as likely to ask her to share his future as any of the women whose chances seemed better; in fact he had as good as done it already, though not in terms. She felt that she could aid him in the ulterior purposes of his ambition, and though he was not rich in the English or American estimate of wealth, she felt equal to the restoration of his fortunes, should her hope of sharing the Grovel millions, or the secret of making others, succeed. Now that the first was an accomplished fact, she felt the importance of withdrawing the prince from the dangerous temptation of Bella's presence. She would have been willing to see him married to the girl's millions, had her plan for securing Lafayette failed. With characteristic feminine inconsistency, she rejected the idea of uniting Jules to Amanda. Her pride revolted from what she held a sacrifice of her brother's possibilities.

A woman might attain her husband's rank, but a man could never rise beyond the wife's, unless he had birth and

wealth. She was willing, though not eager, to have Jules marry Bella, before she had made sure of Clare's consent to accept Lafayette. Now that the marriage was secured, she began to dream of a noble alliance for her brother which should give him rank, and title at the Imperial Court. The Emperor had shown himself keenly appreciative of such support to his dynasty, and she felt sure of the necessary influence to obtain Jules the patent of such a title as a noble marriage would give him the right to claim.

These were some of the thoughts that passed through her busy brain on reading Clare's note. She kept them from her brother, however, for she did not wholly trust his discretion, in the more delicate machinery of the motives guiding her masculine handiwork. There was plenty of time before maturing her plans to lead Jules insensibly to the part she had marked for him in her imposing edifice of family aggrandizement. When she heard of the duel, therefore, she accepted the event as another sign that the machinery of chance had turned entirely in her favor. Bella would be forced to break off for the time being with the prince to devote herself to her guest, and the danger of an impulsive proposal from the prince during Theo's absence in Paris would be averted. While she was in the field, she felt no apprehension.

She possessed the clews to the prince's as yet inchoate purpose and she felt sure of being able to turn his preference to herself when she revealed the new possibilities of her future to him. Of his admiration of her address and partiality for her society she had so many evidences that she felt assured that surprising him into a proposal was easily in her power. She was quick at reading men's minds and apparently only intent on amusing him by her wit and dazzling him by the readiness of her repartee; she was really divining the undercurrent of sober wonder and half resolution, that lay underneath her admirer's pretended indifference to any serious intention. She knew as well as if she had been lis-

tening to the prince's monologues, that he had debated the project of making her his princess—weighing her incomparable cleverness and amazing adroitness in using the grand personages of the court for her own ends, with the dubitable advantages of a bride from his own rank who would be merely an ornament, like his regalia. She felt sure that the Grovel millions would turn the scale in her favor, and she meant to make ample use of them so soon as Clare's settlements were secure.

Trajan in these eventful days was mending swiftly—his body, which, as Elliot said, looked like a "Fourth of July, or militia target," had almost wholly healed in the third week after the encounter. Elliot, indeed, rallied the victim incessantly, addressing him as "matador," "picadore," and "caballero," and advising him to transfer his accomplishments to the bull ring of Seville. Now that the wounds were healed the invalid was seated every morning by the broad bay window, where he could watch the players at tennis and study the soothing foliage of the park.

Through an opening here and there, Crécy contributed its panorama of Norman angles, round steeples, airy donjons, and the wondrous interlaced gargoyles and *arcs-boutants* of the ancient parish church of Saint Pierre, where of a Sunday Elliot had for a time sat under the good *curé's* ministration with the devout Theo. But the irruption of Catholics in the Grovel household had destroyed the charm of the inspiring old place, and the prince had of late replaced Elliot as Theo's attendant. In churchly conduct, the diplomate was the most exemplary of devotees. She had not been in Crécy a fortnight when the *curé* and congregation were devoted to her. Of an afternoon she often entered the choir and played the organ for the choristers, and one memorable Sunday, when the soprano was detained by an ailing child, she had thrilled the congregation by her rich and well-trained voice. For Bella, too, the church had a powerful, an irresistible fascination. She had been there

regularly, many Sundays, before Elliot discovered her attendance. He was leaving the porch after high mass, when the beadle, approaching him respectfully, held out a diamond-set locket, which he instantly recognized as one he had given Bella two years before on her birthday. The inscription being in English, the *curé* to whom it had been taken concluded that it was Theo's, and sent it at once to her as she was quitting the church. Elliot was confounded. Could it be possible Bella had been in the church? He asked Theo, but she could not answer. He waited until all the congregation had passed out, but there was no sign of his cousin. On reaching home he took the jewel to his cousin's room, but she was not there, nor could she be found in the house. At luncheon he handed her the token, enjoying her surprise and, he fancied, vexation.

"I lost it this morning—where did you find it?" she said, averting her eyes.

"I found it in the hands of the beadle of Saint Pierre's, after the mass—were you there?"

"Yes."

"Since when have you become a devotee of that faith?"

"What faith?"

"Saint Pierre's."

"My conversion is coincident with yours."

"What do you mean by that? I don't understand you."

"It is like all questions in theology, susceptible of two interpretations—amuse your leisure by finding both, and then like a devout proselyte accept the most agreeable on faith."

"'Pon my word, Bella, your profundity—not to say Germanesque mysticism, is beyond my poor powers—don't let me burst in ignorance of the occult meaning, which doubtless conveys a lesson of value to the race."

"No—people who make mysteries should be apt at solving enigmas—riddles are read only by those who believe in

the oracle, and orphics, like love, permit no divided mind!"

Elliot blushed and looked intently at his tormentor. "Well, I own that you are talking in Greek to me, with your orphics, enigmas, and what not. Who is the Sibyl, if these are orphics—you, I, or the church?"

"There again my rule holds good—you can solve all these by constancy—to the Sibyl, when you have given her your faith."

"But what have I to do with Sibyls and faith?"

"This is one of the instances where the doctrine of the sophists holds good, where truth would be unkind and therefore inartistic."

"Pray, explain, either or both of you," broke in Edith, impatiently, "what this academic talk all means. I have heard Philip and Elliot talk in this darkly learned fashion before now, but I didn't know you were up to it, Bella!"

"Perhaps Bella would be more puzzled to define what she means, than to continue—what the boys at school used to call 'highfalutin,'" explained Elliot, still smarting from the pundit's thrusts, though he didn't know exactly why.

"Yes, it's rather common for even learned people to make phrases they would be as much embarrassed to define, as grammarians to practice their own rules," said Bella, sententiously, holding up a very rosy peach to admire its fluffy coating.

"My ambition, I am not unduly proud to say, is not in that direction—I believe in saying what I mean in such a simple way that there is no danger of running on rules or breaking them. Besides, rules are like laws, they are made only for those who break them. My ambition being modest keeps me from the criminal dock, either judicial or syntactical—"

"That's a safe attitude at all events, and falls in with the doctrine of original sin, to which, as a son of the House of Arden, you dutifully subscribe—"

"Come, come, Bella, you are really becoming irritating with your perverseness," remonstrated her mother. "Elliot was talking nonsense, and his words didn't have the remotest reference to original sin," she added, construing Bella's covert sarcasm literally.

"There, Elliot, you have ample revenge, for the remembering happier things is not a heavier crown of sorrow than one's jokes taken *au sérieux*."

"I must own that your joking has a sardonic essence to-day, if the fancies you have been putting into words were intended as playful!"

"What is your ambition?" asked Miss McNair, who had listened attentively to what she afterward humorously described as the "spat" between the cousins.

"A young man with so little behind him, and so clear a field before him, should do more than dream dreams, and regulate his life to the maintenance of a regiment of unlineal relations, through Adam, called servants—which is all that people who have a great deal of money do in this world!"

"There is too much solid fact in that remark, Miss Kate," said Elliot, laughing, "to let one relish its humor. But I really have an ambition beyond promoting myself to the post of paymaster-general to the small army that serves under the Arden banners—whom you put in the place of poor relations. My ambition, then, is a devouring one—I mean to master—"

"Your inconsequence?" (Bella.)

"Your temper?" (Edith.)

"Your avarice?" (Mrs. Arden.)

"Your family?" (Mrs. Briscoe.)

"Your mother-in-law?" (Kate.)

"No—greater than all these—" cries Elliot.

"The English language?" (Bella.)

"The rule of three?" (Edith.)

"Your accounts?" (Mrs. Arden.)

"Your vices?" (Mrs. Briscoe.)

"Yourself?" (Kate.)

"You've hit it. I always did say that for real appreciation a man had to go outside of his own family."

"And for a mother-in-law, too," observed Mistress Kate, glancing by the merest motion of her sharp eyes at Bella.

"Come, come, Kate," protested Mrs. Briscoe, "you forget that *we* must be mothers-in-law sooner or later."

"Then you may as well be getting candles lighted and the bells ready, with all the wares in the home market and the stalls filled with buyers," gibed the incorrigible spinster.

"That must be meant for you, Edith," said the unconscious Mrs. Briscoe—whereat, Bella and Elliot, whose eyes met, burst into a merry laugh, which but poorly hid the startled Edith's confusion and blushes.

"It was in Benjamin's sack the cup was found, you recollect," said the determined Kate, "and it was his wicked brothers who put it there. *Hæc fabula docet*, as Æsop says."

"And to confirm your words, the wicked brother and cousin are blushing as Joseph's kin when the trick was found out. I fancy, Kate, you are a magnet for drawing the truth from the guilty," insinuated Mrs. Briscoe.

"Yes, as was said of Madame de Sévigné; she loved verses, she praised verses, and she caused verses to be written. I love the truth, I praise it, I cause it to be told, and when it will make my enemies uncomfortable, I tell it myself."

Under this characteristic sally, the dinner broke up, two of the feasters not sorry to escape further inroads from the audacious and observant cynic. But relieved as Bella and Elliot were to escape further badinage, I doubt, if the question had been asked them, if they could have replied what it was that they both feared to have said. Elliot was conscious that the charm of Theo's satiric and cynical prattle had grown very seductive. He was

happy when she was about. He made pretext for bringing her near him, rather than going to her. He did not think her beautiful, nor would he have said, if analyzing his sentiments, that she was dear to him as Edith. She was not for a moment to be compared with Bella. Her beauty was incomparable to him. But he felt about Bella that she was part of his daily life, and that the time would never come when she could be any thing else. There had been times in the past when his passionate unrest had led him into tender evidences of his fondness, which Bella had good-humoredly rallied, or serenely ignored. He had fallen into a conviction that they were to go on forever, each filled with the passive forces of unspoken passion—not perhaps all the world to each other, but essential to each other, like the vestals of Persephone, joined only by the sense of a common ministry.

I do not pretend to explain this curious relation on Elliot's part further than by pointing out the obvious reflection. Man is the first of all egoists. What he can not get he covets, not as a gift, or reward, but as a right. What he gets without the play of this master instinct, he undervalues or does not value at all. Let the most obvious of truisms illustrate this. Water and air are vital to the frame, but who in millions ever stops to estimate them at their true valuation? Needful as they are, they are not less the sources of the most perfect gratification of the senses. There never was a dolt, however dull, that did not feel the beauty of a fine landscape, yet without the air there could be no pleasure in the landscape, supposing that there could be life, and minus water a landscape is but an etching compared with a von Ruisdael or a Claude!

Elliot thought of Bella much as he thought of Edith or his mother, an imprescriptible part of himself, for whose possession he was called upon to make no claim. It was the vague proprietorship that for the moment held in check what may have been dormant passion. So soon as his egoism met a shock of disputation in possession, he would

burn with passionate desire for the overt signs of preference. This was the secret of his gay indifferentism, but it was a secret, in part at least, only to himself—Bella penetrated the casuistry and it filled her with hot wrath and an impotent desire to teach the complacent lover a lesson, without revealing either design or handiwork in the operation. I do not think that she was possessed by a devouring passion for her cousin. She could not resist his caressing manners, his gay sallies, his sometimes profound tenderness, and at such moments she could have wished the sun of her dreams to stand still on the mountain of her content, the moon of her aspiration to rest on the vale of her dimly discerned felicity. A shock to his tranquil sense of security in Bella's heart would arouse Elliot to the expression of his passion, she felt, but whether she cared enough for the exhibition she was herself uncertain.

Kate McNair, who was as observant as she was caustic, or caustic because she was observant, as science learns its potent secrets only by vivisection, was not in the dark as to the real meaning of the comedy going on in the château, though its action was veiled by every day conventions. She hinted this solution to Edith one day, as the latter, mourning her brother's infatuation for the antipathetic Theo, allowed an expression of disparagement to escape her.

Edith, however, resented any thing like egoism in her brother, not quite understanding the objective sense in which the term was used. For nothing could be more out of the line of fact than to confuse Elliot's unconscious idea of right of possession in Bella, with the coarse selfishness of male complacency. The spirit that pervaded him was rather the delight of undisputed precedence in the object of his love than the self assertion of a right due himself. He was not, in fact, altogether sure that he cared for the exclusive right to Bella's heart, because such an idea as any one else supplanting him had never presented itself to him.

Never was there a darling of family and fortune less spoiled

by the tarnishing influences that these conditions almost invariably bring. He was not self-indulgent, vainglorious, or meanly exultant over the merely sordid advantages he possessed. He was, in short, no snob. He had no admiration for mean things, and chose a kind way out of any embarrassing dilemma by preference in every case rather than an unkindly one. Though imprudent and indecisive, as his mother often regretfully declared, Elliot ought to have been born in an heroic age, when chivalrous acts and knight-errantry were not ridiculous, and sentimentalism not a sign of effeminacy.

Monseigneur the prince, riding away from the château with Bella the next day, remarked Elliot galloping ahead with Theo. "Monsieur your cousin is a beau cavalier, a very handsome young man, with manners *très distingué*."

Bella nodded, but did not respond.

"They make a charming couple, the cavalier and the spirituelle Theo," continued Amboise, as if bent upon extracting some sort of admission from the lady. But Bella shot a little ahead and made no answer. Reaching her side, the prince continued, as the pretty picture of Theo became indistinct in a bend of the road. "Miss Carnot is a phenomenal spirit; she is the readiest wit I ever encountered—I envy your kinsman his conquest."

"When we can afford to envy conquests, they don't affect us much. What we really hold for conquest, we are stimulated to win, or strive to dispute on the part of others. Envy is the Platonic sentiment of ambition, men never envy what they really covet—I mean, that if you thought my cousin to be envied, you would not yield the prize that makes him enviable."

"Mademoiselle, you take our French manner of speaking too seriously; you make abstractions of points one is content to generalize on. I've no doubt you are right, but a man can really envy the possession to another of what he relinquishes in the hope of something more desirable," and the

prince came closer and tried to catch his companion's eye.

"We have a homely proverb, for which I remember no equivalent in French: 'a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.'"

"Yes, our tongue has two or three covering the same thought and quite as cleverly said, but the phrase does not fit my case; I didn't mean to imply that I felt confident that I could win Miss Carnot from her knight, even if I were disposed."

"Let us amend the adage then: birds in the bush wait for the hand of a prince," and Bella, touching her horse, swept out of hearing of the prince's rejoinder. I am afraid Bella would have repented the speech had she caught the expression that followed.

"*Quel aplomb, quelle coquette,*" as the astonished prince hastened to come up with the flying "coquette," but even had he desired to pursue the previous conversation, she showed that it no longer interested her. When an hour or two later he touched his hat to the young lady after giving his hand to her to dismount at Les Charmettes, he rode away convinced that she was won, and that to make her his princess he had but to go through the prescribed forms of his country.

The same evening the prince's secretary arrived as special embassador to the court of beauty, with a document for "Madame, Veuve Briscoe," emblazoned with the crest of the House of Amboise, an eagle and griffin, bearing a serpent in their claws. In this protocol Eugène Amédée François Pierre Fréderic de Grimaldi-Vintimille—Prince d'Amboise, Duke de Charlroi, Marquis de Quatrelieus and Comte de Rire, had the honor of requesting an interview with Madame, Veuve Briscoe upon matters deeply concerning the interests of madame's and his own family, and that, meanwhile, he was of madame, with the expression of his consideration and homages, the most faithful and obedient servant "François d'Amboise."

Mrs. Briscoe read this elaborate *pour-parler* in speechless astonishment. She had barely spoken to the great personage, and not familiar with French usages, she had only a dim notion of what it implied. That it had something to do with Bella, she was certain, but, basing her reasoning upon American methods, she assumed that her daughter must have given the suitor permission to speak. This surprised her, for the confidence between mother and daughter was close. There had never been any secrets between them, so far as she knew. She had set her heart upon a different fate for Bella, but had been careful to let no sign of her desire escape her in Bella's presence. She gave the secretary a note informing the prince that she would receive him at noon the next day, and hastened to her sister to discuss the extraordinary event.

Mrs. Arden was a good deal startled. Immersed in the care of her invalid guests, she had seen nothing of the current that had set in about the personages of the drama going on about her. She was familiar enough with French usages to divine the meaning of the request, but not knowing how much Bella and the prince had been together, was puzzled at its unexpected promptness. She knew that matters of this sort were very formal and very deliberate, and she could not comprehend the prince's precipitancy. "But," she added, after the strange event had been talked over, "there is nothing to do but to find out what Bella wants done. She has probably authorized the prince to act. Put the affair in her hands." This was Mrs. Briscoe's idea from the first, and she hastened to find her daughter. But Bella had disappeared. The maid said she had gone to ride with the Vicomte de Bellechasse, and did not know when she would be back.

When Bella returned late in the afternoon she was strangely agitated, and when her mother entered her room she was lying down, her face buried in the pillows. Greatly alarmed, Mrs. Briscoe raised her head. Her eyes were red, and

there were signs of tears in them. To her mother's agitated inquiries the girl made no response, save to beg that she would not pursue the subject. She had been very wicked, she sobbed, and must endure the punishment she had brought upon herself. It was in this frame of mind she learned the request of the Prince d'Amboise. She paled to a deadly whiteness as her mother read the note, and flung herself in a paroxysm of despair upon the bed. Her mother, unable to comprehend the situation, sat down, exhausting all her resources in soothing the inexplicable outburst. Wisely giving up all attempts at forcing an explanation, the mother sat silent, waiting for the emotion to settle into quiet. But when the dinner hour came Bella gave no sign of going down. Her sobs had ceased, and as her mother moved about preparing to go, she said without looking up :

"I shall not go to dinner. My head is bursting and I could not eat." The mother sighed, but made no answer. When she had gone from the room, Bella got up and sank into a seat by the window. The tears had left their traces on face and eyes. She was composed enough now, but there was a weary frightened look in the eyes. She clasped her hands and wrung them in the penitence of a guiltless Magdalen. The years of her life passed in swift procession before her, all joyous and unbroken by grief until now. She repented bitterly excluding Edith from her confidence.

Her impulsive directness would have withheld her from the wicked course she had been following. She would have kept her from the crime of wrecking the hearts of two men, the ghosts of whose ruined happiness she felt with a shudder of horror, would haunt her the rest of her years. She had only meant to publish her indifference to the fickle trifler who had declared himself a thousand times and then abandoned the pursuit, without giving her a chance to question her own heart. In the swirl of the passions tearing her heart-strings, she held Elliot innocent, for she had willfully

held him at arm's length, and if he finally took her at her word her own persistent action implied, and had set out in search of another, he was blameless in the matter. But her own misery was now redoubled, for in her silly desire to convince him that she had never claimed him, she had gone so far that first Bellechasse, and now the prince, held her to a reckoning.

For her agitation on returning from the ride was the result of a declaration the young vicomte had made her, in which, with great modesty and good sense, he had told her that, making all allowance for the wider freedom accorded American young ladies, he had thought himself justified in believing that Miss Briscoe's evident pleasure in his company warranted him in construing his suit as acceptable to her. The young fellow intimated, with amusing frankness, that he had begun his pursuit, like most Frenchmen, thinking most of the dazzling fortune of the girl, but Bella's beauty had in a very short time turned the suit into passionate adoration. Had she been poor as one of his old flames, the grisettes of the Latin Quarter, he would have still counted her hand the perfect joy of his life. Indeed it was not possible to come within the orbit of the girl and not surrender to her rare charm !

I have purposely refrained from the attempt to set forth the fascinations of her mind and person. Anti-typical to Theo in every thing, Bella shared her rare wit, only it was of a more queenly expression. Where Theo flattered the *amour propre* of those she set out to captivate, Bella exacted homage by a conscious, but subtly unobtrusive, subordinated imperiousness, like a sovereign who looks the command she has no need to utter. Theo won the devotion of men and the admiration of women by an insensible deference to their egotisms, Bella by a profound indifference to them. The prince, for example, found Theo's sparkling epigrams irresistible, because, however audacious, they implied a deference to his superior insight and commanding intellect,

based upon that strongest appeal that can be made to man, the confession of a knowledge of his nature and the study of its working. Theo's most thoughtless levities left the impression that she had penetrated the deeps of the nature she satirized, and found so much there beyond her power to appropriate, that in despair she was forced to bring away only the lightness and inconsequence.

Bella, on the contrary, gave the impression of looking to the depths and coming away indifferent to the revelations her comprehensive glances had mastered. But with all this there was no suggestion of blue-stockingism in her manner with strangers. It was only in her own family that Bella played the part of Bohemian Queen, and let her speech run away with her in the shallow abstrusities that lingered in her mind from her readings of philosophical novels and the insipid psychological studies of the German school. She had no suspicion that her somewhat didactic union with the vicomte could put such a thing as love in his mind any more than the volatile nothings she had interchanged with the prince.

Her state of mind was the complement to that of Elliot's in his pursuit of Theo. She had come to regard his court to herself as so natural and irreversible, that, without making a sign for its continuance or even admitting the pleasure of it, she had come to regard it as her right —as a queen looks upon the bent knee when her courtiers come before her. The transfer of this allegiance to Theo, at first puzzled, then angered, and then grieved her. Pride restrained her from any sign that might have warned Elliot, who was both blind and unconscious until he had lost all memory of any thing but the delight of walking, talking and studying the bizarre nature of the enchantress, alternately piqued by her studied indifference and her seductive confidences. That Elliot was lost to her, Bella owned in her heart, with anguish that made her shrink from herself in a sense of loathing and abasement.

There was no comfort in the sophistication that she had sedulously repulsed his tenderness in the old days when she had lulled her heart by the delusion that she had no need of love, or if she must love, she would wait for some heroic knight to win her hand by some romantic prowess—a union which should take her destiny quite out of the commonplace. She knew, though nothing had ever been said to her on the subject, that her mother and Mrs. Arden had set their hearts on the marriage, and the knowledge had ruled her conduct for years. She had resented the disposal of her heart in this pragmatic sanction. It was the little maid Edith herself, who adored Bella only in a degree second to her brother, who had incited this revolt against the very end she cherished. For she knew Elliot's mind and his dream of winning Bella. The late infatuation for Theo had estranged the two girls. They no longer talked over the events of the day in their chamber, as they had been in the habit of doing. Both pretended to attribute this to the abnormal condition of affairs in the château, where the care of the invalids naturally fell upon them, as members of the family. Bella herself felt it a duty to devote her time to Trajan, whose conduct had won her affection, and Edith, in her timid soul, sometimes thought her heart. For this was the very knight-errantry that Bella had always babbled of in her confidence to her cousin.

Nothing was said at the dinner table about the impending proposal.

Elliot regretted that the vicomte, whom he had met *en route* to the station, was summoned to join his general, who was to command the advance division of the army already at Saarbrucken, near the Rhine. He wondered that the prince, who was known to be ambitious, and whose family had given marshals to France, did not set off with his comrades, but supposed he, too, would be on the march before the combat was joined. As for himself, he felt half inclined to agree with Trajan and take up a musket, and to the shriek

of reproachful protest that followed, he gravely argued his duty in the matter, unblushingly reiterating the arguments he had contested when uttered by the invalid up stairs! To which he added the sage reflection that his own country might some time need his services, and an experience gained in the foremost army of Europe would be of value.

The mother and aunt resumed the discussion of the prince's proposal, when the family dispersed from the dinner table. Mrs. Arden was overwhelmed when her sister revealed Bella's manner of receiving the news. She could not conceive the prince venturing to propose formally for the girl's hand without letting Bella know of his purpose. It was agreed that she should join her sister and find out the facts. Bella was sitting in the embrasure of the window, her eyes fixed on the trees without, where the twilight was veiling them in transparent mist. Her aunt kissed her tenderly, and was a good deal startled at her white face and tell-tale eyes.

"You've had nothing to eat, child; I sent your dinner up, hoping you could eat something," she said, glancing at the untouched tray on the table.

"No; I'm nervous, and don't feel at all like eating," said Bella, in a constrained weary voice.

The little group sat a good while in silence. The darkness fell, and when Mrs. Briscoe got up to ring for lights Bella asked that they should not come until bedtime. Then Mrs. Arden nervously spoke of the prince's letter, and the necessity of accepting or refusing the proposal he was plainly about to make. Bella shivered a little as her aunt began to talk, but when she finished there was no response.

"You know, Bella, Frenchmen are very punctilious in these affairs, and though you may have accepted him yourself"——

"I never accepted him! I never"—broke out the girl vehemently, and then stopped, suddenly conscious that she had fallen into the very trap laid under her eyes. Now, the

amazing state of the girl's mind was her indecision as to the answer the prince should receive. She had never for a moment dreamed that he had any other motive in seeking her than pastime: in fact, she had never thought of his motive. She accepted his devotions hardly conscious that they were marked, and certainly unconscious that they were significant. She would have looked upon a proposal rather as an amusing diversion, had the blank face and sad eyes of the vicomte not risen in her mind as a perpetual reminder of her guilty trifling. During the long hours of anguish since she learned of the prince's purpose she had reflected on the miserable dilemma her own heedlessness and folly had brought about. As to loving him, or being his wife, the very suggestion was horrible; for Bella, with all her book-knowledge, was naïvely ignorant in things that any shallow fashionable girl could have instructed her in.

She, as you see, believed, like a simpleton, that marriage implied love. When she first thought of the prince in the light of a pretender for her hand a few hours before, the very suggestion was repulsive. But with the hours of reflection a new image had replaced the first. He was not in the prime of his first youth, like Elliot. He was not so attractive in face, figure, or carriage as the man she had refused a few hours before, but he was a handsome and imposing man.

She began vaguely to fancy that it would be a heroic resolve to force herself to love this great nobleman, who was about to fling aside family traditions and the practices of his station and ask her to become his princess. She wondered if he would pain her as the poor vicomte had pained her by the mute reproach of his wounded love, the half sob in his voice, as he said simply:

"Mademoiselle, you must pardon the presumptuous error of one who, loving you, and not fully understanding the manners of your country, misconstrued your kind and frank welcome for a deeper feeling. It is all my own fault, and you have nothing to reproach yourself with. I shall always love you, but I shall see you no more."

She had been smitten with a choking of guilt and pity. What would not she have given to be able to believe that the generous lad spoke the truth ; that her coquetry had not warranted his heart in opening into love. Would the prince have the same reproach to make? She thought over all that had passed between them, and she groaned in an abandonment of perplexity, because she had allowed herself a gayer liberty with him than with the other.

Such a thing as a serious purpose on his part she would have scouted twenty-four hours before. Bringing conscience, quick with the sins committed against the vicomte, to bear, she felt, with the shrinking horror of the martyr, that she was called upon to immolate herself upon the pyre her thoughtlessness and guilt had upreared. This was the confused state in which her mother and Mrs. Arden found her. But the resolution which was easy to caress in fancy, was a far more formidable thing when she was called upon to act. She must now say yes, or no, as decisively as if the prince was before her, and all the doubt and trembling of the past three hours condensed and intensified themselves in a lurid specter, that hovered, shadowy and dreadful, in the rosy horizon of that future which had been her dream by night, her vision by day.

"You know, my child, that I must have your answer before I can meet the prince," said her mother, taking the troubled head in her hands, and kissing the feverish forehead. "I declare, Bella, you are really ill; you must go to bed, and, above all, you must eat something," the two panaceas that occur to woman's mind as spontaneously, in whatever crisis, as leeching to the practitioners of other days. The girl got up wearily and threw herself on the bed, while Mrs. Arden, rising, ventured a little joke about "no crown coming without its cross." But Bella had no repartee for what under ordinary circumstances would have excited a nimble dart. The crown she thought of with a shudder, for it would encircle a brow unworthy to

wear it, the heart not going with it. Whimsically enough, this chance suggestion reminded her of something she had left out of her previous troubled gropings. She would be a princess; she would wear an imperial coronet, the ducal crown of the Grimaldi, the tiara of a marquisate. A throb of exultation sent the blood in a rush through her veins. She should take precedence of the greatest. At court she would be only a remove from royalty. She could by a word be the proudest dame in France—an individuality among the *noblesse* of the continent.

"Mamma," she said suddenly, her eyes gleaming in the darkness, "let this question rest until morning. I will tell you what to say then. I want the night to think it over."

"Bella, dear, in a matter of this sort, reflection is destruction. Love or marriage is not a question that is aided by counsel. You either do, or do not love the prince; if you love him, it will be a crime against yourself to refuse him; if you do not love him, it will be a crime against him, a sin of the most guilty sort, to accept him," and the mother took the troubled head on her breast.

"Ah, mamma, you don't know how wicked I have been; I must punish myself and make atonement, and I think I shall be equal to it in the morning. I am weak to-night. Ah, my poor mother, if you knew how wicked I have been, you would command me to do some fearful penance."

"I can imagine how wicked you have been, my darling; I think I comprehend it. You have made Elliot miserable? Well, he is a man and must bear his grief."

"Why, mamma, what *can* you mean?" cried Bella, rising and turning to see her mother's face in the darkness. "Elliot! What have I done to him?"

"You certainly must have seen, my daughter, that your cousin adores you, and—and—"

"Why, mother, you are dreaming; Elliot is at this moment infatuated with Miss Carnot—very likely engaged!"

Mrs. Briscoe was thunderstruck. Elliot's union with Bella she had regarded as a settled thing. His looks had told the story any time for a year or more. When her daughter reproached herself with wickedness she took it for granted that it was her capricious treatment of her cousin's love. The mother at this new complication grew seriously alarmed. What did Bella mean? What wickedness could she have upon her mind, if Elliot were not the victim?

"What do you mean, Bella, by being wicked? I thought you were reproaching yourself for wounding Elliot. I can not allow you to talk in this careless way; tell me all, my child. Your mother alone can aid you if sinless, and comfort you if in fault." Bella began at the beginning, blushing scarlet as she was forced in justification to make more or less apparent the wounded love that had driven her to her idle coquetry. When the tale, which was told with many tears and prayers for pardon, was done, Mrs. Briscoe kissed the facile sinner, and said, with a sigh of relief:

"You have acted with imprudence—almost heartlessness. I am afraid you have driven Elliot into an engagement that can only result in bitterness and misery for him and his family. But you have not been wicked. You must refuse the prince's offer, unless you are certain that he can inspire you with a genuine love. Do not make the awful mistake of confusing rank with love. He may be honestly in love with you. If he is, you will soon discover it. You can refuse to engage yourself until you have examined yourself and studied him. If he loves you, he will be better satisfied to have you deal frankly with him. If he does not, you will be saved from a wreck compared to which the most trying vicissitudes of life are a mere May shower." And so Bella, greatly comforted in her troubled mind, slept the dreamless sleep of the repentant and forgiven that night, and the next morning the prince received the answer which the prudence of mamma suggested. The great man was inexpressibly astonished. It required all the breeding and

savoir faire of his rank to enable him to comprehend that he, the descendant of ten centuries of kings and princes, who had been angled for by court belles—ladies of his own rank, should be put on probation like a mere adventurer or parvenu *bourgeois.* There was considerably less languor in the princely figure, less indifference in the high-bred drawl, as he replied with irreproachable politeness, "Madame is right. I have been too precipitate. Make my homages to mademoiselle your daughter," and bowing with grave dignity, he quit the room.

"What in the world is the prince doing here this time of day?" said Elliot as, standing at Trajan's window, he caught sight of the suitor getting into his vehicle.

"He came by arrangement to ask your aunt for your cousin Bella in marriage," said his mother calmly, moving to the mantel-shelf. The young man dropped into a seat as if shot.

"And he—he—has been accepted?"

"And he has been refused!"

Had the far-seeing Theo arranged the complexity to keep Elliot still uncertain, she could not have wrought to better purpose; if Bella had not accepted the prince, she was to be had for the effort, whenever, if ever, he saw fit to make it. Possession is not only nine points of the law, in life it is the pretext of a good deal of the folly men commit in love.

CHAPTER XXII.

"TO BE WROTH WITH ONE WE LOVE DOTH WORK LIKE MADNESS IN THE BRAIN."

PHILIP'S disaster had divided the family forces at Les Charmettes. Before that misfortune Trajan's room had become a sort of general rendezvous. So soon as his wounds would bear it, he was put in a chair and wheeled to

the open window, where reclining in enfeebled animation, he listened, without taking part in the family confidences. For the young man had become tacitly a member of the family. Mrs. Briscoe, to her own no small surprise, found herself addressing her charge, for it was she who asserted a motherly responsibility in him, as Trajan—quite as naturally as she called her nephew by his given name. From this infraction of the ceremonious to a general disregard there was but a short term, and when the young man was able to move about, Trajan was the name by which the whole family addressed him. The habit had a humanizing and potent effect on the homeless youth. He heard it with something of the grateful joy a man feels, who, traveling for seasons in a strange land, comes suddenly upon a group who speaks his own tongue.

As once upon a time journeying in Morocco this historian, abandoned for two months to the meager linguistic acquirements of Arabs, Spaniards, and Moors, came one day in the prophet's mountains, over against the sacred city of Tétaun, upon a company of his Yankee countrymen, whose voices sounded sweeter than marriage bells, whose artless and comminatory criticisms of the land, its manners, and people, seemed as profoundly sententious as the studies of La Bruyère, or the maxims of La Rochefoucauld. Bella, thus addressing her hero for the first time, by pure accident, blushed bewitchingly and then explained, that she felt quite like a Roman, in the days of the Cæsars, the name revived so much of the classic.

"It's a sad burden for such a commonplace fellow as I am," said Trajan smiling, "but my poor father, who frightened my mother into it by a more trying alternative, 'Aurelian,' fondly hoped that it would inspire me to great deeds. He lived in the past and thought that modern men were in every way inferior to the Romans.

"Among his papers we found a plan for the naming of his children. The boys were to be Trajan, Aurelian, Terence,

Ovid, Thucydides, Tiberius, Haphæstion, Antinous—fancy a red-haired, frowsy Antrim lad, struggling all his life under such a name as Antinous"—and the young man's gored torso shook till he coughed with pain. "My father's great purpose was to reconstruct the characters of the classic reprobates. He had a theory that Nero, Caligula, Caracalla, and Tiberius were grossly wronged by the partisan writers of the day.

"They were to these enemies what a Whig was to Clarendon, or a Tory to Macaulay. Clarendon's testimony would make Hampden, or Cromwell, a Claudius or a Caligula, while Burnett or Macaulay leave little to choose betwixt the Stuarts and the Antonines, Mary of Scotland and Messalina. I found my classic cognomen a heavy burden at school, where the small satirists who had pushed far enough in Latin to know the exploits of the emperor, were forever drawing sprawling arches, fabricated of potatoes and turf, or columns of onions and grog bottles, in delicate allusion to my Irish nativity and the staples of my ancestral fields.

"The favorite caricature was an emigrant ship landed at Castle Garden with an unkempt youth carrying a hod and in the distance the City Hall—in the back-ground broken heads and swinging shillalahs, marked 'Trajan's Way.' These exuberances of boyish wit sometimes resulted in punched heads and the heavens were hung in black for the most audacious of the young rogues—but I came in time to bear it all with good humor, and then the merry lads teased me no more. The spirit of caricature is rarely malignant, and a laugh, which is its purpose, placates the satirist and saves the victim."

"Hech!" exclaimed the unmollifying Miss McNair; "there's no equaling the deviltry of small bodies, when the will-o'-the-wisp of tantalizing gets into their daft heads. They made my life a burden at school. Callow pates that never had a lesson would seem crammed with all the classics that bore on the Scotch. I would find extracts from Johnson's Dixionary defining oats, as food for horses in England

and men in Scotland, in my recitation books, and drawings of Caledonian heads undergoing trepanning to insert jokes. I had a good stout arm in those days," she added dryly, "and I put something else than jokes in their silly noddles.

"Then in my spelling book when I went to class I found pan-cakes, in all the colors of the rainbow, sprawled over the pages, a delicate allusion to the national food, or a bagpipe scrawled on my music. But I soon boxed the compass of this idiotic,"—Kate, when excited fell into her national accent and said "eejiotic"—"fulery. I became teacher in the same school afterward and I think there was less friskiness among the idle chatterboxes." Every body laughed, begging Kate to continue her reminiscences of her drastic *régime*—but she shook her head. "I'm no telling this to amuse ye, triflers that ye are—it's to warn ye agin the day ye'll ha' bairns o' yer ain"—she had quite dropped into broad Scotch by this time, stimulated by the ill-concealed merriment of the circle.

"Let us hope for better things, Kate," suggested Mrs. Arden, mildly.

"What—than bairns? I say ay, with all my heart, ma'am," returned the spinster with vivacity.

"No, I didn't mean that," said Mrs. Arden laughing. "I have had great comfort with my 'bairns,'" and she looked with tranquil tenderness at Elliot and Edith, the one trying to follow a joke in *Figaro*, the other busy with some complicated floral needle-work of varied colors and silken texture.

"Kate, if you disapprove of bairns so strongly, how is it I see you giving *bonbons* to the small Crécy urchins of an afternoon, when their parents are fishing in the canal?" asked Elliot mischievously.

"And why do you disturb the cotton market buying whole pieces of calico to clothe the little girls of Saint Pierre?" asked Edith slyly.

"You wouldn't have the brats goin' about a fine land-

scape like this in their pelts, like Sawney's bairns at the Firth," retorted the stout hypocrite parrying the last stroke first. "As for the sweets, ye meddlesome young villain, would ye have me go crazy with the noise of the wee plagues, when I can put them quiet by a handful of sugar-plums?"

"But, Kate, even that justifiable corruption does not explain your taking them off to the woods in a carry-all, as I saw you do with my own eyes the other day. Surely that wasn't to keep them quiet while you gave your philosophic mind to admiring the landscape," said Bella gravely, pretending to be curious rather than contributing to these evidences of the spinster's duplicity.

"And Kate, you humbug, what were you doing the other day when the little boy fell into the water? If my eyes didn't deceive me you were covering him with your shawl, that precious white crêpe," insinuated Mrs. Arden, as her evidence in the case of Kate *vs.* Kate.

Still unabashed by this array of witnesses to her turpitude, the gentle cynic changed the action to an offensive one, exclaiming with intention: "And if I were minded to tell what I've seen going on—what would ye ha' to say for yersels—my jaunty lads and lasses? D'ye mind whaur ye waur o' Saturday last, Maister Elliot, my fine fellow—yes—well ye may grow rid in the gills. I'll no follow yer example in telling tales—but ithers ha' seen as well as yersel, and I culd mak the mithers wonder, too, if I tould all I saw certain lassies carryin' on—but I'll spare ye—for ye'll grow older," and as Edith sent up danger signals, the tormentor got up, pinched her ear, and kissed her—Elliot laughing and looking uncommonly wise, while his mother displayed some uneasiness and the others curiosity.

"Why do you spare Trajan and Bella?" asked Elliot impudently—"are they perfect, that you have no railing for them, Timon of Crécy?"

"Hech! as for that, they're as daft as any o' ye, give

them time," and the sharp eye softened as it caught the eye of the invalid fixed in alarm on her. "There's no need o' wasting words over a lad that knows no better use for his limbs than wrestling wi' Rothschild's animals. As for Bella she's old enough to have sense—but I doubt she has," she added reflectively.

"There's no danger of self-esteem taking strong root in this family, gentle Kate," said Elliot, as she relapsed into silence.

"Ah, young man—self-esteem has a gourd's growth and a hussy's craft, it's like water in a sponge, always ready to be squeezed out o' ye when ye fall into crafty hands. There's no danger o' any o' ye—ye have enough o' it and to spare, too, I'll warrant."

Conversation like this kept up the tonic quality of the life of the château during these long weeks of tranquil repose, varied by sharp encounters with Theo in the drawing-room when that counter-irritant to Kate came over to call. The two were old friends—or old enemies rather, for the Scot had no love for the clever American. Kate had known Theo when she first came to Paris; she had met her in various *salons* of the "Colony;" she had read of her unholy triumphs at court as she called them; she had sniffed at the common rumors of the likelihood of her marriage with this and that great person. Her chief cause of hostility, however, was the Godless conversions, or as Kate called them, perversions, of the saints to "Romanism." Under her very eye, in the azure stream, as it were, of the very blood of Knox, the intrepid little propagandist had carried off conquests to "idolatry," as Kate vigorously stigmatized the faith of Rome. There was hardly a painter or student, susceptible of faith of any kind, that Theo had not wholly or half won into active apostleship in the hated faith.

The battles between the two were fierce and relentless, but the younger was always the victor, her keen sense of humor supplying weapons too strong for Kate's impatience

and dogmatic sincerity. When the prince's attentions to Bella attracted the spinster's wrath—and she marked them from the first, she was convinced that it was an unholy plot on Theo's part to entrap the heiress into Romanism and her fortune into the coffers of the Jesuits. She groaned in spirit over the blindness of the family to these transparent artifices of Jezebel, as she called Theo, but bold as she was, she dared not break ground openly to counteract the scheme.

She had known the prince in Paris. He had been lavish of his presence in the American colony, and it was generally understood that he was looking out for a lady with millions who should restore the grandeurs of his decayed châteaux and enable him to lead in wealth, as he eclipsed in rank, all the personages of the Imperial court. She had watched Theo's maneuvers with him, and believed that it was her intention to marry him if she could. But the new move at Crécy convinced her she was wrong, and that it was to secure Bella and her fortune for the Church the arch schemer was intent.

Kate racked her brain for a weapon to avert this impending disaster, but the fates themselves seemed to work in Theo's favor. The proposal, which she heard from Mrs. Arden, was a stunning blow to her. She was silent and peevish for the whole day and quite surprised Elliot by the almost venomous acridity of the remarks she rapped out at him in response to his casual pleasantries. She was in the room when Elliot learned the purpose of the prince's visit, and she understood the equivoque in Mrs. Arden's reply.

She knew that the prince, though not accepted, had not been refused, and she meant to move heaven and earth to make the final answer a negative. But how? Mrs. Briscoe's single weakness was a love of rank—not as pushing, or self-seeking, but a traditional esteem of birth and what was known in her New England home as gentility and culture. She knew that such rank as was offered her daughter would be sure to win the mother in the end, whatever her senti-

mental notions of joining the cousins in marriage. Nor was the shrewd plotter deceived by Bella's apparent indifference to Elliot.

She had watched the two for a year, and she knew that it needed but a spark to set the fire that lay unkindled in both, into a flame. She had never regarded Elliot's diversion with Theo as any thing more than a caprice—the aberration of a spoiled darling too confident of his powers to bring to pass whatsoever he set his mind upon with conviction.

She had, while distrusting the intimacy, felt little fear, because she knew Theo's consuming ambition and preternatural adroitness in bringing to pass whatever she set her cold heart upon. It was from Edith's troubled hints that she first learned of Elliot's serious danger. She watched the two closely and became convinced that Theo had relinquished the rank of the prince for the Arden millions.

She knew the futility of openly opposing the infatuation, hoping for some chance weapon that might fall into her hand and enable her to strike a decisive blow. It never occurred to her to think of Trajan as an ally, though the enmeshing of his friend in the fowler's snare was daily, hourly anguish to that silent and helpless sufferer. He, too, learned from Edith's hints the state of the case, and he was plunged into despair. He was cruelly embarrassed. He shrank from warring upon a woman, and that woman the one to whom he had given his whole heart. He indeed doubted very much whether the conduct of the girl, which seemed to him odious and wicked as well as heartless, would strike the tolerant and easy-going Elliot in such hideous colors as he saw it. He could not reveal the smuggling episode, for that had been confided to him in honorable confidence, and however he himself might abhor such enterprises he knew that Americans did not take a very severe view of the traffic.

Elliot had never mentioned Theo's name of late, and Trajan could not obtrude his opinions unless asked for them, and perhaps not then. At one moment he resolved to con-

fide the whole story to Mrs. Arden, then repented of it as cowardly to the miserable girl, and disloyal to Elliot. Twenty times he was on the point of laying his perplexities before Edith, whose fidelity he trusted implicitly—but could not bring himself to weight that pure conscience with so miserable a burden. He had vaguely supposed, without really dwelling on the subject, that Elliot's heart was given up to the worship of his beautiful cousin. Something, indeed, that the young man himself said suggested it, and his conduct until Theo. came upon the scene, confirmed it.

Elliot's agitation when the prince's mission was told him, startled Trajan, who was looking at him closely. He became very pale and his mother leaving the room, as she made the answer perfectly equivocal, he sank into a chair trembling and silent. He felt Trajan's eyes on him, got up and began walking the room—then, as if possessed of the solution of a problem he had been debating, shot out of the door along the hallway to the landing, and calling Pierre, who was standing in the lower hall, asked him if Miss Briscoe were in the house. Pierre did not know, but would go and see.

"Tell her that I am waiting in the library, and beg that she will give me ten minutes." He strode into the roomy apartment, looking idly at the back of the books when Pierre returned with the answer that mademoiselle was not in her room and her mother thought she was in the park. But she was nowhere to be found in the grounds, and the young man entered a sylvan arbor and resumed his reflections.

Upon what trifling chances our woes and joys depend. A half-hour earlier would have saved him the path of many pains, the companionship of much misery, the discovery of vile treasons, the falsehood of a wicked woman. It was not to be, and he sat in the shade, the cat-bird calling and the lark's song falling downward like the symphony of silver chords from an aërial orchestra. The repose of the place restored to him the rationale of the situation. He had sent for Bella, with the purpose of upbraiding and renouncing her

—if it were true that she had encouraged this absurd offer from the prince. It was less egotism than trust in his cousin, that made him confident of his power of supplanting the prince, with lover-like inconsequence losing sight of the moral question involved in Bella's possible plighted word and his own compromising absorption in Theo. He had solved all the perplexities of the complications quite to his satisfaction, and resumed the happy serenity natural to him, when whom should he spy, sauntering toward his retreat, but the fascinating Theo herself, bewildering in fluffy draperies and elastic in step as a fairy.

"By George, what an adorable witch it is!" he said, half aloud, as the vision came nearer. He called out as she reached the door:

"Where away, Titania? are you going to, or coming from a fairy revel—disputing or conceding Queen Mab's dominion?"

She stopped, recognizing the voice, but Elliot had slipped behind the thick trellis of vines; then peeping in the doorway pretended to see nothing and saying as if to herself:

"I could have sworn a voice I recognized as Caliban's. Come forth, foul monster—your queen commands; Mab, the mistress of the acorn throne, drawn by tandem dragonflies; her cohorts 'atomies' in lily liveries; her guards long-legged spiders; her trumpets hare-bells; her scepter a rose; her orb a lily's petal with dew drops glistening at each end; her crown a sunbeam stolen from the violet's heart and tinctured with its purple; her mantle a mosaic of the lady-bug's hood, the daffodil's vest and the lizard's scale; her lamps the firefly's coal; her army trains of eager ants; her courtiers all the winged world that mock the wild wood in color; her subjects all manner of living and loving things; her sword of state a hornet's sting; her canopy a marigold—"

"There—don't go any further, or I shall really believe you Queen Mab in the fairy flesh and fly your supernatural witcheries. I didn't know you were a poet as well as phil-

osopher," said Elliot, coming from behind the covert of clematis and Virginia creeper.

"Not an original poet. I am merely borrowing from Shakespeare," said Theo, coming into the shady coolness and sitting down. "Why are you here in eremite meditation? I'll wager the seriousness on your brow means something—losses by flood or field, or crosses in love?" she asked with irresistible impertinence.

The charm of her subtle beauty was upon him, the enchantment of her manner, the defiance and yet deference of her glance provoked him. Under that spell, he forgot everything—forgot his pledge of the morning, the shrine of his life's devotions—his unspoken, but none the less plighted faith to Bella. He broke into a vehement protest of devotion—of a love that mastered his reason and without which his life would be a blank, and very much more of the same passionate and plausible nature, all the more passionate, fluent and plausible, I believe, on my faith, because his heart held another image and his eye saw another form than the siren before him.

He had taken both her hands while speaking and tried to look into her eyes. But she never for a moment lost her self-possession. She met the glance calmly during the outburst and then looked over his head in a dreamy, repressed exultation. He bent closer as his words became more eager, but as his face neared hers she swayed backward with a willowy movement of indescribable grace. She made no effort to release her hands; on the contrary, she clasped Elliot's firmly, as if by instinct aware that she thus kept the power of controlling him in her own hands. In this attitude, with a pulse at its normal beat and the shifty eyes as serene as if adjusting her robe, she looked the foolish fellow in the face and maddened him with a deliberate lie:

"Elliot, I never dreamed of this—had I supposed you were free, I—I—"

"But I love you—I love you—will you be my wife?"

"You must give me time—I can not answer you—I dare not answer you—"

"What do you mean?" he broke out impetuously. "You dare not—are you a child tied up by French conventions?"

He strove to draw his hands from her. But she held them firmly, and his eyes remained fixed upon her face. She made a little movement like a shrug, and continued:

"I dare not answer you, for I am the promised wife of another—whom I do not love."

"Then you do love me—say that—you can surely say that," and he strove to release his hands to clasp her to his heart. But a strength hardly inferior to his own responded to his efforts. He was still kept at arm's length. He looked at her in amazement. The gleam of amber in her strangely bright eyes, with an inexpressible thrill recalled to him the saffron demons reflected in the brackish waters of the pool!

She relinquished his hands and sank back in the rustic seat trembling, her eyes fixed on the doorway. Elliot turned. Trajan Gray, tall as a specter through emaciation, and pale as the linen that swathed his neck, stood under the blooming canopy that framed him. He was leaning on the arms of Kate and Edith. His eye was fixed with an expression of yearning—then scorn—as he glanced upon the cowering figure in the seat. He turned gently to Elliot and spoke:

"She is telling you an untruth; she does not love you. She dares not; she is the unpromised wife of a man, whom she does love."

"Gray, how dare you—this is cowardly, vile. By Heaven! if you were not a cripple—"

"Oh, Elliot—you forget—you forget what we owe Mr. Gray," cried Edith, trying to clasp his arms. He shook her off savagely.

"I forget nothing—I know that he dares to come into the presence of the woman I love and say what no man or woman shall say, while I have an arm. I say that I am in my senses when I declare that he must answer for this atrocious coward-

ice. That I shall hale him before all men and proclaim him a coward and calumniator."

While speaking he had gone to Theo, sitting stony and rigid under the trumpet flowers and partly veiled by them. He put his arms tenderly about her and drew her head upon his breast.

"You infamous coward," he cried, "there's my answer—my defiance—whether my wife or another's this arm is ready to defend her, shelter her!"

Trajan had sunk under the shock of these dreadful words.

A servant with a wheel chair had come from the château behind him as he walked feebly through the grounds, and Kate ran and wheeled it behind him, ordering the servant to wait at some distance. Sinking into this Trajan listened to the intemperate outbreak of the man he adored, as a mother adores a son, or some brothers do their brothers. Then when the passion of the other calmed into the last bitter speech he fixed his eyes on the now reassured Theo, who did not look at him.

"Theo," and his voice trembled as he pronounced the name—"You must have some of the feelings of your sex; you can not be wholly heartless; you must be human. Have pity on the man beside you. He never harmed you—he never did wrong to a human being. He wrongs me now, but he is not himself. Have patience," he cried, as Elliot started to speak; "you will have the future to think over what you have said, when I'm far from you. Theo, think of your mother—think of your girlhood, before this craze came upon you—remember that you brought one man to madness, God forgive him, nearly to crime. The man beside you averted that crime and the man he saved is resolved to avert another—at whatever sacrifice. Be human—tell him the truth or I will."

Even Elliot was staggered by this implied previous bond between the man he had reviled and the woman he thought he loved. He recalled certain snatches of anguish during

Trajan's delirium—but come what might, he resolved not to desert the woman he saw his own now, beyond recall.

He drew her closer to him and pressed her hand confidingly. Strengthened by this noble devotion, inspired by this immeasurable evidence of her power, all the devil in the wicked creature's nature came into play to defy and extricate herself from irremediable disaster. She rose—with Elliot's hand clasped in her own. She faced the man she had cruelly wronged, the man she loved, and recklessly, sneeringly measured out these terrible words:

"Mr. Trajan Gray, I'm at a loss to understand the right it gives a man to insult a woman and traduce her, because he has wearied her, until life was a burden, with his love. Admit that you loved me, admit that you declared it, admit that I frankly told you I could not afford to marry you—admit that I gave no other reason! Does that justify you in playing the odious part of eavesdropper and traducer? I give you full liberty to tell all you know of me; that you saved my life, that I was fond of you—that I refused you! What then? Must a woman marry every adventurer who lies in wait until chance puts her in peril of her life and he rescues her in cheap heroic attitudes? Mr. Arden has measured your conduct precisely as it deserves; but its punishment does not fall to him. My brother will hold you to account for this vile, this uncalled-for, this incomprehensible attack. Mr. Arden, may I trouble you to take me out of this place!"

As Kate began to push the chair back Trajan stopped her by a gesture, and looking at Elliot frankly and kindly murmured, "Stay," then gathering his feeble strength, he said in low, distinct tones:

"Are you satisfied with this explanation? Do you take that—that—" he hesitated and Elliot made a threatening move—"that wicked woman's word," he continued, smiling at the threat—"before mine? Reflect a moment—don't answer in your anger—more than you know depends upon

your response—remember the past—remember what you know of me—don't look in her eyes—look in mine, or still better look in these," and he pointed to Edith, trembling and breathless, beside him.

Elliot's eyes were fixed on Theo's; his hand was clasped in hers; her breath was in his face, her matchless witchery was on him like a spell. He turned deliberately and with scornful emphasis said:

"I have already expressed my opinion of you; if I were called upon to repeat it I should be at a loss for words adequate to convey the loathing I feel for a man who takes advantage of his condition to insult the weak and restrain the strong. Unless your prudence fails you as your senses seem to have done to-day, you will be wiser to keep out of the reach of a decent man's arm, when—"

"Ah—Elliot—Elliot, you are mad. Mr. Gray, forgive him—pity him!" Edith spoke and turned to implore Trajan, but her words did not reach him. The strain had been too much. His head had fallen limply on his breast. He had reeled into unconsciousness.

"For my part, Meester Elliot," Kate's Scotch coming out strong in her anger and terror—"I think ye've made a grand conquest th' day. Ye've stabbed the best friend and affronted the best man in a' the world, and I wish ye much joy of what ye've got in return," and she threw a withering look of scorn upon Theo, as, perfectly calm, confident and victorious, she passed the helpless victim she had twice brought to death's door.

Trajan's, timely or untimely, appearance upon the scene was not, as the reader may suppose, the work of chance. The energetic Kate, with the thought of Bella's misery in her mind, had gone out in the park to reflect upon the complexities that were tangling the feet of the lovers. She met Edith, likewise brooding upon Elliot's perverseness, and with both minds charged with doubts there was a fuller expression than ever before. Edith, too, had heard some of

Trajan's ravings and her suspicions had been confirmed by the singular episode of the flowers, as well as the strong words Trajan had used in the Ravine of Revêche when he had alluded to the woman who had wronged him. Kate was not slow in putting all these fragments together. There was nothing evil that she was not prepared to believe of Theo.

As they were conspiring they saw Elliot enter the arbor and they saw Theo follow him. Kate's decision was instantly taken. It was not too late to cure him and cure him decisively. She was deaf to Edith's timid protests of the ill effects that might come to Trajan from the revival of such a disaster in his present weak state. The spinster was, however, inflexible. The cause of honesty, was, she declared, at stake, though I'm afraid, that if she had been put on oath she would have had to own that the desire to trip the evangel of Rome was not the least in the motives that impelled her decisive maneuver.

"Your brother and Gray are sworn friends," she argued, "and the one would lay down his life for the other—or they believe they would," she added dryly. "It's the least one can do for the other to risk a relapse and thereby save him from the clutches of an evil woman."

Edith was frightened at the vehemence and exaggeration of her unexpected ally. She did not like Theo, but she would not, even to herself, call her evil. "We may not like Miss Carnot," she said modestly to the enthusiastic Kate, "but we should not call her bad names. That doesn't help us, you know," she added, apologetically, as the other shrugged her shoulders disdainfully, "nor does it help Elliot back to reason," and she sighed tearfully. Luckily for the intriguers Mesdames Arden and Briscoe were not with the invalid, when Kate, fearlessly taking the mission on herself, entered the room where Trajan sat idly sketching, his sheet supported by a cushion on his knee. Kate told the story rapidly, sparing nothing. She wound up by telling the astonished Trajan that he now had an opportunity, such as comes

to a real friend but once in a lifetime to prove his interest in Arden. This was enough. Leaning on the resolute woman's arm and directing the valet to take the wheeled chair out by the rear entrance, he hurried feverishly to the fatal tryst.

CHAPTER XXIII.

AN ESSAY IN ÆSOP.

YOU are called upon to admire the consummate address of the wolf at this stage of the comedy. What out of Æsop could be finer than that last sally? The admirable manner in which the teeth and claws were not only hid, but their ugly nakedness made to protrude from the tender lamb come to the rescue of his kin! The fox family are noted in Mr. Æsop's histories for the ingenuity of their dealings with the lambs, but it will be admitted that the wolf is really the master wit of the two. While the fox is content to carry alarm into the fowl family, his triumphs are sordid at best—a cackling pullet or a tough old hen no longer of much use for the pot or the spit. But wolf, not content with carrying off the lamb, by his own consent throws a firebrand into the lamb family, which is bound to disintegrate and break it up, so that in future incursions each member may be carried off with impunity. Anger, shame and remorse, guests never before known to the lamb cot, are now to lurk constantly among its members, leaving them all helpless prey to the family of the foxes and wolves, who for spoil always affect an *entente cordiale.*

From which, indignant, gentle, captious, disgusted, sympathetic, or whatsoever character of reader you may be, you will observe that the most grievous trials in life are put upon us as often by those who love us as by those who hate us; that the eagle supplying

the feather to guide the dart that goes to his own heart, is not altogether a fanciful conceit. I think it very likely indeed that Trajan's words in the arbor, uttered by any one else, would not have thrown Elliot into such a frenzy of passionate wrath—nor if Elliot were really so deeply in love with Theo as he tried to make himself believe, would Trajan's denunciation have been so fiercely resented. Had Elliot in his soul been certain of blamelessness, it would have been his endeavor to convince the friend he loved that he was misjudging and wronging the purest and best of women. Indeed, I am afraid I must own that Elliot was trying to bolster up a bad and foolish cause by creating a worse condition of things which should overshadow it. We are prone to boisterous buffoonery of this sort in the serious broils of life—we have a sort of octopus instinct, which incites us to relinquish a foolish prey or belittle a losing game by a thick cloud of misunderstanding or falsely assumed anger.

Now, specious as were the words and brilliant the *coup* by which Theo plucked safety from the nettle danger confronting her in Trajan's unexpected and startling intervention, Elliot, had he been a wise lad, would have detected the discordance in her tone, would have seen the shining truth in Trajan's eyes, compared to which Theo's theatric though plausible half-truths would have stood out for what they were. Elliot was by nature truthful to the core; he hated lies and was so little familiar with them that he did not recognize one when told him. The fact is a lie is always more likely to succeed than the truth, for a lie is meant to please, to carry out a certain end, whereas the truth has but one purpose to fill, one part to play. The protean lie humors all whims; it enlivens when we are gay; inspirits when sad; and turns the dark roseate, when we have glided into the black ways of wrong-doing. Admitting all this, and granting the paradoxes, the scene does not leave much in the young man's favor, I admit—but remember that he was in that most trying sort of love—the unwilling.

So far as the pure current which sets in with a man's prime may be gauged he loved Bella; so far as that abnormal caprice which masters reason, without satisfying it, may be called love, he was wrapped up in Theo. With this difference, the one rendered him tranquilly happy, congenial with all his surroundings and increasing tenfold his confidence and trust in his family and friends, while the other filled him with unrest, colored his conduct with a quality of the surreptitious, and, as we have seen, had just forced him into a vulgar and brutal brawl with a man to whose love for him that of a brother was but a feeble comparison.

"The higher the mountain, the deeper the valley," is a homely German proverb; so the truer the affection, the more tender the bonds, the fiercer the anger required to heat the temper to the wounding point. It was the very intensity of his love for Trajan that influenced Elliot to the cruel words he uttered, quite as much as the insidious influence of the evil woman who had come between them. With Edith's tearful eyes and Kate's calm scorn searching him, he felt capable even of striking the man whose presence without a word told him that he was doing wrong. He felt instinctively that no motive other than his own happiness could have impelled the chivalrous, self-sacrificing Trajan to appear in the arbor —a very mask of death—come from the grave to shield and protect him.

If Mrs. Briscoe's astonishment had been great on entering Trajan's room and finding him gone, her horror may be imagined when he was carried in later, as she believed a corpse. Kate took the whole responsibility upon herself—curtly explaining that she had a "fool notion" the air and flowers would better him. That an accident had happened, and that he had lost consciousness. He was restored in time, and on a hint from Kate made light of the adventure, but Mrs. Briscoe declared that no one but herself should be trusted with his movements again. His strength seemed miraculously revived by the shock, and to Mrs. Briscoe's

terror he was up and dressed when she came up from dinner.

It had been a melancholy feast. Elliot did not appear, and Edith was up stairs with a nervous headache. Bella had her dinner served in her room. All allusion to domestic affairs was repressed by the presence of Claridge and the Countess Pleinevide, who came over to say that Elliot was dining at the Duclos Château. Edith's headache seemed to have left her so soon as her mother went to dinner, for she presently stole along the hall and as she saw a servant entering Trajan's room she bade him wait in the ante-room and went in herself. The invalid was up and sitting at the window—a pen in his hand and paper spread before him. He did not hear the light foot-step, and did not turn his head. She went up quite to him and said softly:

"Oh—Trajan—I'm so glad to see you up again—I feared that—that—"

"That I was done for. Oh no," he said gayly, "I'm just in trim for a tramp. Do you know I was just writing to you, and you'll laugh, but I have been puzzling ten minutes—whether I should say 'Dear Miss Edith'—or, 'Dear Edith'—which would you have written?"

"I should have said Dear Edith," she replied with delicious naïveté.

"Well then I will just write that—D-e-a-r E-d-i-t-h—Look how firm the hand is—not much of sick man in those Gothic curves, is there? That would pass for copper-plate any where—there's copper-plate and copper-plate, you know. Now I have written—Dear Edith—dear me, how pretty that sounds—did it ever strike you—the charm of those two 'd's?' I protest the name should always be spoken that way—dear Edith—I like to hear myself say it, do you?"

"Yes—you say it very nicely—you must have been practicing it—it never sounded so nicely to my ears before—except from Elliot,"—she halted in confusion, then started guiltily and blushed at the malapropos allusion.

But Trajan pretending not to remark the name, replied gayly—

"Oh, he has had more practice than I. In time I shall have attained his melodious intonation. Let me see—dear Edith—It's curious, before you came I had it all on the end of my pen—what I was going to say I mean—and now you have quite driven it away."

"Have I! How unfortunate. Perhaps it will come back when I'm gone? What could you have been going to say? It must have been something important, as you knew I would be here after dinner. Perhaps I'd better go and it may come back."

"Oh, dear me, no, not for the world. But what a head you have got—well I've reached 'dear Edith,' and do you know, I don't like to go any further for fear of spoiling that. I hold that line a credit to any sick man in Christendom. Don't you?"

"Yes, it's very well written," assents Edith, perplexed by the whimsical gayety of the invalid. "Suppose you try to think what you were going to say?"

"But do you know that while you're here I can't think of a word of it."

"Oh, very well, I'll go and come back presently;" turning to go.

"On no account! You must help me to write; without you I see now it would be impossible. Now, I'll resume. Here goes." He scratched a few lines—perhaps three, and looked at her.

"Now what have you written? How can I help you unless you say each word as you are about to write it?"

"Sure enough: well now, listen; for completeness' sake I will begin at the beginning:

"DEAR EDITH;—

"Perhaps it would be wiser for me to leave unsaid what I feel impelled to say now, as I am going from the dear roof that shelters your dear head!"

Edith started up, "No—no—no, that isn't at all proper, you mustn't say that, it's wicked—I won't listen to any thing so—so—cruel."

"Well, what would you substitute? let me hear. I really don't want to add a new wickedness to my other monstrosities. You dictate and I'll write!"

"Will you though?"

Trajan gravely took another sheet, laid it over the first and asked innocently:

"How shall I begin?"

"Why—Dear Edith, of course—how forgetful you are!"

"D-e-a-r E-d-i-t-h," he wrote. "That's even better than the first. Now what?"

"*A silly idea came into my head, that I wanted to go away, because—because—be—*"

"Why three becauses?—that's an error in style; the rule is for strong emotion, repeat once, but never twice, that turns pathos to bathos."

"I believe you are only teasing me. I won't write another word. You're a wicked fellow!"

"I believe I am, but you know you haven't written a word yet. I have done the writing. Now continue, and don't repeat unless you want to surprise the reader by an unexpected situation."

"Well, scratch out one because, and then say, *I know that every one in this house would feel miserable, if I should*" [long pause, pen in air, voice all of a tremble, and a second "should" almost launched, and then the resumption] "*seem so unmindful* [score that—and while I think of it, score *silly*] *I know love me and would be so grieved,* [score those two] *if I were to let—the—the stupid words of a foolish boy* [score *foolish boy*] *break up the most charming* [ah—ah, don't put that down]—Oh let us use a French word, [don't write that], *that ever was.*"

"Is that all?"

"No, you must put the signature, you know, with your sentiments."

"Will you express them for me as they ought to be written?"

"Yes, it does sound abruptly; you had better end—"*but above all, dear Edith, I do this because I know it would—would* [ah—ah] [don't put ah in, please] *cause you so much misery to think—that—that—one you so tenderly love has been the means of depriving you of another that you* [ah—ah] *so much like.*" *Faithfully and lo*—[I mean] *affectionately your friend, till death, Trajan Gray.* Now read it."

Trajan reads it aloud, omitting all the intercalary outbursts.

"It's horribly mixed, but the sentiments are sound, don't you think so?" she asks in the most charming perplexity.

"Irreproachable; they would do credit to Miss Goodman's academic head and heart."

"Well, now you may seal it and send it to my room by Pierre who is in the dressing-room."

"Yes, but you know you were going to help me write my letter."

"What an ingrate! *that's* your letter, and I shall not help you any more. I'm sure your satirizing me. I won't endure it."

"What won't you endure, Edith?" It was Bella's voice surprised and curious. She had entered the open door unperceived.

"This preposterous young man thinks he knows better what is good for him than I do, and he has been jeering at me in the most heartless fashion. I wish you would take him in hand, Bella, and administer to him as you do to Elliot, when he's unruly," and the engaging dissembler faced the enemy with only a tell-tale blush to denote her trepidation. But Bella, laughing, said she had no doubt Edith could manage a more unruly patient than Trajan seemed to be, and the talk rippled on in a gay strain until the rest of the family appeared, the two mothers not a little sur-

prised to find the two daughters so suddenly recovered from the nervous headaches of the dinner-hour—ailments which, by the way, they had entirely forgotten.

When Elliot entered at a little after ten there was a light burning in Trajan's room, separated from his own only by the small dressing closet. He was surprised to find the door closed, and on turning the handle still more surprised to find it locked. He fell into a chair, for the first time realizing poignantly the gulf which the day's unhappy events had made between them. It had been his habit, not only during Trajan's illness, but before it, to pass an hour or two before going to bed in his friend's room. Now this pleasant season of expansion was at an end. About the same age, the young men were on closer terms than Elliot was with his cousin Philip. It never occurred to him to go over to the latter's room. He would not have gone into Trajan's presence now had the door been open, but he recognized with a sort of shock the effects of the words he had spoken in the morning. What those words were then he had at the moment of uttering them but a very faint idea.

I doubt if he fully comprehended them, for a certain form of speech is like champagne, it inebriates the senses without affecting the brain. We become exuberant in using them; exuberant either in anger or hilarity.

Elliot never remembered to have spoken harshly in his life. The novelty intoxicated him. The words seduced him further and further, and in the end it was an almost heteronomic disparity that existed between the things he said and the things he meant. If he had at the moment of his most scathing reproach in the arbor found himself cool enough or logical enough to synthesize his sensations, I suspect they would have been something like this: I have been acting like a simpleton; vanity, egotism and fretfulness have involved me in a false position. I have used the most sacred forms to describe my feelings for this woman, whom, after all, I suspect I do not love honestly and loyally.

The sense of a certain falseness in my protestation to her makes it necessary that I should convince her of my integrity. How can I do that better than by affronting and degrading a man whom she knows I love and admire.

As a lie can only be protected by a lie, so one false position must be bolstered by others, and so on to the end of the chapter. He had gone too far to retreat. His walk homeward with Theo did not result in putting their relations more definitely than when she had uttered the lying evasion in the arbor, but by an instant meeting of the lips when the burning mouths met in a lingering kiss, the girl pressed closely to his bosom, Elliot conceived that they were pledged, and that when the loveless bond that bound her to that other should be broken, she would be his wife. Beyond this there was no pledge on her part. He had no claim upon her. She had never hinted even that she shared his love, such as it was.

But now, in the silence of the night, with the light burning in the sick-room yonder, he was touched by a cruel remorse. His windows were open. The moon was at the full, but as it was square above the château, the gables threw the façades into deep shadow. He longed to see with his own eyes how Trajan had borne the dastard blow. He slipped his shoes off, and putting on a pair of soft slippers let himself out on the narrow balcony before the window.

A wide esplanade shelf ran along the whole front of the château, which an agile athlete alone might make a footway by clutching the projections of the windows and pilasters. It was, however, at best a perilous passage. Elliot gave the peril no thought, but boldly set out on the precarious pathway. In two minutes he was at the window of Trajan's room and on the little balcony.

The curtain concealed his figure, even had the other been at the embrasure. He was not, however. He sat at the writing table, absorbed in thought. As Elliot cautiously adjusted the curtain to enable him to look into the room,

Trajan started and looked about him. He had heard nothing. There was no sound, but the bond between the two men must have vibrated, a sensation we often experience when we feel that eyes are upon us without realizing the actual presence of the gazer. He seated himself again and fell to writing, swiftly, eagerly—as if afraid to lose the impulse if he gave himself time to ponder over the words.

He sighed, but not wearily, and as he folded the sheets he began to speak aloud, and Elliot quietly withdrew, shrinking from confidences that he felt he had no right to hear. He sank wearily into a chair as he reached his chamber, wondering where the miserable business was to end, and feebly incapable of any definite resolution.

When the yellow sunlight poured into the room in the morning, Edith entered and found him there, his hand resting on the curve of the chair, the sunlight playing with the golden clusters of his hair. She had been, since his return from college, the first to come to him in the morning to lay out his apparel and prattle with him as he dressed. She did not at first comprehend the situation. She fancied he had arisen earlier than usual, but the truth flashed upon her at a glance. Laying her hand lightly on the head, she said, tenderly :

"Elliot."

He opened his eyes, dazed and heavy. He looked around him bewildered. Then it all flashed on him. He kissed the head leaning on his breast, then, putting his sister gently away, arose and walked to the window. The candles had burned down to the sockets. It was eight o'clock. He must have slept the whole night, but he did not feel refreshed. Edith, refraining from all mention of the previous day, moved about the room, laying out his dressing cases and linen. While thus occupied, the door was flung open and Mrs. Briscoe, trembling and pale, came in, holding a letter in her hand.

"Oh, Elliot, Edith! What has become of Trajan? I

found this letter for Edith on his night-table, his clothes all set out and addressed, and his knapsack gone. What does it mean? There is some dreadful mistake or mystery, for last night he was gayer than I ever saw him. What does the note say, Edith?"

It was with swimming eyes and heaving bosom that Edith read the note, the beginning of which she remembered so well:

"DEAR EDITH:—

"Perhaps it would be wiser for me to leave unsaid what I feel impelled to say, now that circumstances compel me to leave this dear roof that shelters your dear head—[here the hand changed strangely]—After the events of to-day it would be gross intrusion for me to remain another night. But I can not go without telling you that your sweetness, kindness, and devotion have given me an insight into love as I fancy the redeemed see it. I once thought I loved. The memory rises as an infinite mockery when I realize your purity, candor and goodness. Then I longed for possession. Now all the world is in bloom to me, the sky radiant, my heart light, the future a dream, in the simple saying to myself—I love her—I love her—I love her. I could write this a million times and then set to writing it again and make myself drunk with joy at the mere thought that I dare do it and that the daring will not offend you. I honestly own that I do not understand it. I am leaving you with the joy of the bridegroom going to the altar, for I feel that I am not going unblessed by the benediction of a pure and sustaining love. But—wonderful—most wonderful, my beloved,—(another's I know you can never be)—if I felt that we should never meet again, that the lips I never have touched, I never should touch, I should yet be filled with a joy so sober and sustained that I should not despair or ever become sad. You have sent the sunshine of a sublime confidence into every fiber of me, and I feel that I can confront every fate the world may have in store for me. I humbly, devoutly

take God to witness that this feeling grew in spite of unceasing protests against my own immeasurable unworthiness. What the hand of God, and the hand of God alone, has brought about, I dedicate myself to consecrating into a passion worthy not only of your priceless love, but the miracle of its grace. Is this extravagant and mawkish? I don't think you will so regard it, and as no other eye than yours shall ever see it, I am content if it be tenfold more extravagant, provided it gives you an idea of the exaltation into which this first glow of my love for you throws me. I am about to pass out of your life —out of its daily circle—but such is the inspiration I feel that I am content to wait, for I do not go out of that heart, tenderer, nobler, than heaven ever consented before to let be in human form. But if I wrote all night, and then wrote again, I should say these same things, as the roses repeat their bloom and the lilies rise in the same purity and the birds sing the same note. I love you—I love you—I love you; and I am, by the fountain's pledge, your friend for life, and by the grace of God,

"Your true lover always,

"TRAJAN GRAY."

Elliot had gone to the window and was looking out impatiently, while Mrs. Briscoe sank into the chair that had served Elliot for a couch. She broke out almost angrily:

"What does he say? Why don't you read it aloud?"

But Edith continued to the end, and when she had folded the sheet and put it in her pocket, there was an almost bird-like gladness in her voice as she said:

"He has gone back to Paris, and Elliot will explain why."

But Elliot was not called upon to explain. Mrs. Arden entered the room with an open letter and handed it to Mrs. Briscoe. It was from Trajan, evidently an after-thought, in which, expressing his profound recognition of the more than parental tenderness he had been honored with, he explained that

a disagreement between himself and Elliot made it impossible for him to remain for a night, even, under the roof which he could only associate with graciousness, amity, and consideration. He begged as a crowning favor that the subject might never be alluded to in Elliot's presence, and, above all, no explanation asked him. In good time all would come out right; that it was not for him to remind Mrs. Arden, that she had a son so kind, so honest, so manly, so tender and just, that if he had a failing it would be counted a shining virtue in most others, and among the most precious privileges of his life was the right to lay the homage of as true love as man ever bore to man, beside that of his dear friend's mother.

"Oh, Elliot, Elliot, what madness is this that has wounded a heart so tender, that noble, true and self-sacrificing boy," sobbed Mrs. Briscoe as the letter fell to the floor.

"Shall I read it, mother?" asked Elliot, picking up the letter.

"Not if you have done him wrong, my child," said the mother, drawing him to her and looking in his eyes; "no, you can not have wronged him; read the letter."

Elliot still hesitated, and laughed a feverish, dry laugh that grated harshly on his listeners' ears.

"You had better read it, Elliot. It will show you the friend you have lost," said his aunt, bitterly.

"Oh, then I don't care to read it," and he flung it on the table. "Friends we lose are not worth wasting time over. One has enough to do to *ménager* those one keeps."

"Indeed, Elliot, if you talk like that I shall be forced to believe you have done this young man some grievous wrong; for the innocent only are forgiving and contrite, the guilty harsh and stiff-necked. I never heard you utter such a sentence as that before. It is unnatural and unlike you."

She took the letter from Edith's hands and, presenting it to her son, added:

"Read the letter and tell us what it means."

He took it and walking over to the window, with his back to the rest, read the lines Trajan had written, without a word. While he read, Bella and Kate entered, like the rest, alarmed.

"What is this about Trajan? Pierre says he has gone—what does it mean? He was in no condition to travel and gave no hint of such a purpose yesterday. What can have happened?" asked Bella, anxiously looking from one to another of the melancholy group.

Her mother groaned: "It is true he has gone—nobody knows where, or why—unless it be Elliot—ask him."

"It's my opinion that if ye wait for him to tell, ye'll be as wise in yer coffins as ye are now," muttered Kate significantly, in a tone audible only to Bella and her mother. Elliot finished the letter without a word, folded it and handed it over to his mother, saying simply:

"I have nothing to add to that. The explanation seems to me ample. He's gone and nothing can be done to change the situation. Let the matter be dismissed, and forget you ever knew him."

Bella, who had taken the letter from Mrs. Arden, spoke a little imperiously:—

"I don't agree with you at all—you may hold Trajan's heroism lightly, we are apt to ignore what we can not emulate, but my mother and myself owe this man a debt that the ordinary tokens of life can but poorly repay. I'm convinced from what I have seen of Trajan's character, that he is incapable of even the thought of disloyalty or baseness. I am sure that if the facts were known, he has been cruelly outraged. I mean to know the facts and it will not be long before I shall." She spoke in a tone of suppressed anger and with a defiant look at Elliot as though warning him that she held him culpable. Edith, who had been standing in the window with her hand fastened upon the treasure in her pocket, stole to her cousin's side during the excited address, and fondling her in a pleading way,

whispered something in her ear. Elliot affected not to hear his cousin's accusatory speech. The party descended to breakfast and the incident was not alluded to again in the family circle. During the morning Kate had a long talk with Mrs. Briscoe, and Edith with Bella, which resulted in the latter seeking out her cousin and apologizing for her words.

"That's just like you, Cara Bella—tell the truth in anger and gloze it away in repentance."

"It's a family *faiblesse*, isn't it?" she rejoined. "Here you are having done something as unpleasant to you as pork-eating to a Hebrew, and as unwilling to avow the fault and mend it as royalty that can do no wrong.—However, I promised not to renew the subject—but like Webster, support my country—that is my kinsman—right or wrong."

"That is immensely kind, but hardly flattering—"

"Love, faith and folly are born blind. Let that content you."

"I should be well satisfied with the first—blind or otherwise," and the young man arose, trembling and eager.

"I think Theo. will have no difficulty in satisfying you then—if love is enough, and all the rest thrown aside—if—"

"What do you mean? I don't understand you—love is enough I own, but I was not alluding to Theo. I—"

"You have no right to allude to any one else," and Bella with a little toss of the head left him as he sank into a chair, muttering, "What an infernal jackass I am!" Yes, it had come to this. He had shown the wolf yesterday; he had shown the fox to-day. Moral blindness was following sensual impulse. Manifestly the serpent's trail was misleading the seed of the woman, whose heel was no longer raised to crush the crested head!

It was Edith who after breakfast undertook the care of Trajan's effects. She was singularly buoyant and cheery for a young person who had been part of such trying crises as had befallen the family during the past six weeks. Why she should lock herself in the deserted room and set about

packing the young man's effects with her own hand, and this with the air of a priestess serenely conscious of the acceptance of her devotions, I am at a loss to explain.

It was perhaps laudable curiosity that impelled her to open the portfolio and abstract two half-finished sketches—one of herself, the other of Elliot. It may have been the thrifty spirit inherent in every genuine woman that sustained her courage to take from the wardrobe the torn and bloody waistcoat that had been stripped from Trajan's riddled body on the day of the disaster. It may have been fear that it would soil her person that suggested the tenderness with which she handled it, but I do not remember, save in dealing with saintly relics, to have ever heard of touching the lips to a blood-stained vest, as this pious maiden did on taking down the famous garment in which Trajan had encountered the bull. Nor can the value of the object account for her seizing with a little gulp of joy a dark and withered flower that fell from the watch pocket of the garment as the maiden carefully folded it and laid it in a packet by itself.

The folded flower was a marguerite, and Edith's mind, though intent upon her work, roved back to that memorable day a month or more before when she had plucked and given it to the young man, who had no suspicion of being observed when he thrust it furtively into his bosom. She held it in the palm of her hand and sank down in a dreamy reverie.

The images therein must have been very agreeable, for she smiled and smiled, and in pure absence of mind pressed the discarded flower to her lips, though within reach on the balcony there were clumps of glowing blossoms, fragrant and gay—some of them red as the blood when it first crimsoned the white leaves of the withered flower that she gazed at so fondly in the palm of her little pink hand. Then, I don't know by what whimsical association of ideas she was moved, she drew from her bosom the letter which we saw thrust into her pocket a few hours before, and as if she had never

read a line, eagerly devoured every word of it, and then like the flower, pressed it to her lips, and as if ashamed, held it open, covering her bright face. Then she rose and going to the table picked up the pen, examined it with tender scrutiny—put the point to her lips—to test the quality of the ink, I suppose—though that was dry as the blood on the marguerite. Then pen, flower, and letter were all put in the envelope, and the pocket probably being otherwise occupied, the package was restored to her bosom. When Pierre came to the room an hour afterward the baggage was all in order to ship to the Rue Dragon—but the old fellow had to go to Elliot's room for ink and pens to make the inventory for the agent!

A cloudy quiet settled down upon the château. Philip's room became the daily rendezvous, and that jocose philosopher soon restored the light current of humor to the conversation of the various members of the family group. Philip had been told casually of Trajan's departure, and though suspecting that there was something in it more than was divulged, he did not seek to penetrate the mystery. Gay cheer was still kept up at the Duclos Château, where of all the guests only the Prince, La Baronne, the Rossitors and Theo. remained. Jules, she gave out, had been summoned to Paris by his patron De Grammont, and expected every hour to set out in the suite of Prince Jerome, who was going on a mission to Florence to negotiate an alliance with his father-in-law, Victor Emanuel—which would give the Emperor one hundred thousand men after the first victory on the Rhine.

CHAPTER XXIV.

TRAJAN GOES TO COURT.

IT was near midnight when Trajan finished writing, packed a few needed articles in his knapsack, put out the lights, and descended the broad staircase of the château for the last time. A night lamp threw a dim wavering light over the hallway, but he had no trouble letting himself out. He wrapped the key in a sheet of paper and taking it to the servants' door fastened it to the knob. Then slinging his knapsack lightly on his broad shoulder he set out on the graveled walk, looking his last on the charming scene he knew so well and was so strangely quitting. The full moon was directly overhead and revealed every object with a clear twilight distinctness. At the bend in the curving roadway where clumps of bushes cut off the view, he turned and cast a glance upon the peaceful house. Lights were still burning in Elliot's and Bella's rooms. He sighed softly—with a kind "God bless her, God bless them all," turned and struck out with long strides down the dark highway under the trees.

Two hours later he was at the Esbly station, and in time for the mail to Paris. He slept a good part of the way, and at five o'clock when he entered the friendly studio in the Rue Dragon, he was less jaded than he had feared. He was a good deal pulled down, however. As his eye rested on familiar objects, he put his hand to his head, not quite sure whether he was dreaming, and the dim morning light the atmosphere of a vision. But his pictures, models and other objects, carefully covered by the thoughtful Madame Agay, were real to the touch, and he knew that another page had been turned in the book of his life. Dressed as he was, he threw himself on the sheetless bed and slept the sleep of exhaustion until midday. Great was the bedazement of Madame Agay when the *garçon* having informed her that the artist had come back, she

hastened up to present Trajan his family, Madame Betty, Trip, and the little Amédée. Madame Agay was *désolé* at the worn-out figure of her lodger, but said cheerily:

"*Attends*—for a few days and you will be like the stalled ox of the carnival. Ah, I know how to put flesh on the bones of fine fellows."

Trajan was in high good-humor. He fondled and pinched the ear of the delighted small boy, idly wondering if a certain somebody would adopt this diversely assorted family, if she ever consented to adopt their guardian? Madame Betty's fleecy fur seemed to have grown longer, her manner more languid, her gaze more dreamy and exoteric. She rubbed her soiled and rather disreputable head against her master's limbs in a furtive way, as if she dreaded being called to account for sundry diversions, during her friend's absence. Her eye was bleary and dissolute, and it was plain from the reserve with which Trip received her advances, that he could, had he been minded to forget the immemorial chivalry of his race, have revealed doings on the part of Mistress Betty which would have shaken the confidence of the most indulgent master.

Madame Agay, however, was constrained by no such tradition. She narrated the history of the three since Trajan's departure, and dwelt with much humorous animation upon Madame Betty's unseemly diversions on the neighboring roofs and the small progeny she had guiltily deposited under the *salon* divan. Trajan's reproaches to the abandoned Bett elicited a frantic emission of purrs, an elongation of the back, and a spasmodic mew, which said in the plainest language—"What would you have? If one is deserted to one's own devices one can't immure one's self from the attention of one's kind, and would you have the race of cats die out?" But Trip had been most exemplary. He had guarded Amédée in all his sallies in the neighboring groups of infantile hostiles and always brought him off in triumph, content with the commendation of Madame

Agay and the idolatry of the small Amédée, of whom he regarded himself as the special protector in Trajan's absence.

All the old whimsicalities came back to the young man with a delightful sense of fatherly responsibility. He romped with the little boy, discoursed with Trip and Betty, and quite forgot the interval of eventful weeks that had separated them. That day honest Madame Bonjean made a little *fête* at the *Maison Aux Artists* in honor of the prodigal. A score of the *Beaux Arts* lads were there, and you may be sure that delectable Beaune wine that made the *Maison* the joy of the quarter was not stinted. Smug, who had taken the second prize in the *salon*, insisted that Old Gray should share a bumper of the *vin du champagne*, and I suspect that there were a great many bottles sacrificed over the return of the wanderer.

It was in the humor that this merry tipple inspired that the young Drake, who aimed at sharing Piloty's "touch," hinted that Trajan's friends were dying to know of his good fortune; that Belcour had darkly hinted at a princess—"Bonanza, of course," rescued by the intrepid *camarade* from the jaws of death. But he had left the story at the point where prince Crœsus, with the dowager princess Crœsus, had set the caskets before the hero to choose that which contained the ivory miniature of the charmer and the title-deeds to the treasure of Gumguz." So every body demanded a speech from Gray recounting his adventures. But Trajan with some difficulty begged off, making known the insidious and romantic nature of Belcour's genius. He had fallen in favor with no princess, and his adventure was of the most commonplace description, not even material for a *genre* picture!

He missed many of the kind faces of the *Beaux Arts* and learned that sixty had joined in one company for the campaign and that sixty more were going to enroll themselves within the week, and he was urged to lead them. It was the very wish most in his thought, but he said nothing to the lads of his purpose. From the *Maison* of Madame Bonjean the friends adjourned

to the Café Procope. Gambetta and Réclus, the great geographer, were already present, when the friends arrived. There was a burst of applause as the Fine Arts Delegation entered, and the patriot Gambetta left his place to come over to the corner of the new comers and shake Trajan's hand. He led him apart and asked where he had been, why he looked so pale, and what he had been doing for the good cause, adding:

"You know that at the first moment we are going to declare the Republic. Our agents in the army report that it can not muster two hundred thousand men. The Germans have a million already on the Rhine, and we expect every day to hear that Bonaparte has committed suicide or abdicated. They will try to proclaim the Prince Imperial, but we have three hundred thousand men enrolled in the capital and we are devising means to get arms. Do you think we could get any in the United States? We want to send some one to the German headquarters to find out whether they are willing to recognize the Republic, or whether they mean to uphold Bonaparte. I have suggested you, because you understand German. You must hold yourself in readiness to set out at a moment's notice. You are peculiarly adapted for such a mission. You are an American, and if the worst comes to the worst would never be suspected."

"But is there really no hope of the Imperial armies beating the Germans? You know it would be fatal to the Republic to owe its existence to the ruin of its armies. I own that I would rather beat the Germans first, for vile as Bonaparte is, and dolt as he was, to be trapped into this war, he is an angel of honest dealing compared with Bismarck and that sanctimonious old driveler, King William. Bad as the Bonapartes are, they do not represent a race of lineal robbers, perjurers and ruffians as the Prussian oligarchy does. I own I would bear a half century of Bonapartism to see that national sneak-thief, Prussia, put back to its original condition of a beggarly duchy, made up of lawless freebooters."

"That is pure sentimentalism," said Gambetta, laughing. "Let us but once make the conservative Republic modeled on the American plan, march, and all these Hohenzollern puppets and Bismarck reactionaries will be swept away. But while they are able to hood-wink the German people, an intelligent, over-cultivated, politically inept race, into the roaring farce of divine right, we must make use of them.

"If we can make them see their own interest in a solid Republic here—we need not concern ourselves about their objects. The Germans have shown in the past that they need only a spark to kindle into enlightenment. That will come, and all the better that their rulers are identified with knavery and ignoble thefts." Then he added cautiously, "Yonder is a spy of Pietri's. Be careful that all that is said is inconsequent. We meet at Belleville, Sunday, and I will have something to tell you."

Who should enter at this moment but Jules Carnot. He flushed on catching sight of Trajan, returned the distant nod of Gambetta, and came over and shook hands.

"I thought you were still at Crécy?" he said inquiringly. "When did you come back? You are here to help the cause, I suppose?"

"I came back last night, and I do feel like doing all I can to defeat the enemies of France." Trajan spoke with some constraint, which was not lost on the other.

"Well, there are plenty of them—the Germans are known to be a million strong, and, doing its best, the empire, ten days after the declaration of war, has not been able to get one hundred thousand men near the Rhine."

"A million can be gotten, if we all go—that is if all Frenchmen feel as I feel—that humanity is interested in dispersing the hordes willing to fight under such leadership and traditions as the robber race of Prussia."

"I wish to God, all Frenchmen felt as you talk," said the other, gazing with curious wistfulness into Trajan's eyes, as if for a moment on the point of saying something which

on second thought he withheld. Trajan knew what Jules was thinking—but gave no sign. He added, however, frankly—

"I don't like the emperor, as you know, and despise the empire, but I will uphold him loyally in combating those banded robbers, the Prussians."

Jules looked about carefully, and seeing no one near said in an undertone, "Then you're just the man needed at this moment. The regent wants some trustworthy person to send to the emperor with private despatches. She can't confide in those about her, for she knows very well that in case of reverse a Frenchman, specially of the court party, having every thing to expect from the other side, will betray her or the emperor, to gain favor. Would you undertake a mission to Napoleon? He is now *en route* to Metz, and will be with Froissard at Saarbrücken by Wednesday next, when the campaign will begin, unless the Germans assume the offensive meanwhile." As Trajan remained silent, he added:

"To tell the truth, the leading friends of the empress foresee peril for her in case of disaster—no one now expects a march to Berlin—but Pietri declares that Lebœuf has let the army get into such ruts that he expects, as the very best issue, a disgraceful peace, perhaps the cession of Strasbourg. Such news would bring a mad rabble on the empress. By some means Pietri has got your name as a friend of the poor lady. He showed her the report of a speech you made before the *Treize*, and your name has been put down with that of three other foreigners. Strangers could do what people who are identified with Bonapartism could not—carry the empress off without suspicion."

Trajan mused as he recalled his dispute with Ferré and the miraculous agencies of the empire—not less than the whimsically tragic destiny that was to make the words spoken at random, bring about what he had never foreseen.

"Why don't you go? The emperor can trust you," said Trajan suspiciously.

"I leave Paris with Plon-Plon to-morrow or next day—or I should do it with pleasure."

"If the regent, in the interests of the state, commands my services, I shall obey her; but it must not be concealed from her that I am a Republican. I am for France first and the Republic, when France asks it. If with this understanding I am commanded to serve, I will do my best, and do it loyally."

"It was the conviction of it that prompted me to speak. I, like you, am a Republican," said Jules, darting his eye to the corner where Pietri's agent sat loudly applauding something Gambetta was saying, "and like you I believe in France first."

"I shall make no secret of my purpose, if I go, to my friends here," said Trajan as Jules moved off. "I will betray no confidence, but I won't play a double part."

"Ah, as to that—use your own judgment," replied Jules indifferently. "I should advise you to say as little as possible—but in any event, my name is not to appear in the negotiation."

Trajan's mind was still perplexed by this extraordinary contingency when he received a piteous letter from Mrs. Briscoe, telling of a dangerous wound Philip had received in a skirmish of outposts. He had not written of it himself, but General Vinoy had sent to inform the family that he would do all he could for the young volunteer. "I dread the thought of his lying in hospital or prison, and I write to ask you, if you will add to burdens I am under to you by visiting my poor boy—for he is a son to me, if you should, as you once said, go into the army. I can not tell you my anguish, the keener that I dare not let Elliot know, as he would add to our misfortunes by flying to the army himself. I do not ask you to go, dear Trajan—I'm not so selfish as that, but if you do go, will you not comfort my darling by your presence and rescue him if he be in danger."

So strange are the controlling circumstances of a man's

destiny—this poor mother's plea helped the wavering soldier of democracy to become the champion of an empire and a dynasty that he hated.

The next day Trajan received a note from Pietri, the préfect of police, begging him to appear at the Hotel de Ville at four o'clock and providing him with a card which would assure him instant admission. He at once took a cab and drove to the law office of Crémieux, the great advocate, where he expected to find Gambetta. The deputy was not there, but a clerk directed him to an office where he could learn his movements. After many disappointments Gambetta was found in an obscure lodging in Montmartre. He had learned of the purpose of the government to seize all the opposition leaders, and for prudence he changed his lodgings every day. Trajan then laid Jules' proposal before the Republican chief, without mentioning Jules' name. He wound up by showing him Pietri's note, and asked him what he should do in case he was proffered a mission to army headquarters!

"Accept, of course; you can be perfectly loyal to the mission without compromising yourself with the cause. At the headquarters you can be of service to France. You will not be long there. What if in returning you were taken prisoner by the Prussians? Your ingenuity would suggest some means of attaching yourself for a time to the Bismarck cabinet. He will need people who know France and the French language, what more natural than that he should give you a trial? During that time you could learn his purposes as to the empire and the chance the Republic would have, in making a lasting and just peace. There would be nothing in this to compromise the most sensitive honor. It is a miracle for us. You must go."

Pietri, a dark-faced, sharp-eyed Corsican, with the craft of his Italian origin outlined in every feature, questioned the young man closely. He did not seem displeased with his avowal of Republican sympathies, remarking paternally,

"We all have generous dreams like these when we are young. The Cross of the Legion on your breast will banish folly of that sort." He concluded the interview, bidding the young man be in readiness for an instant summons at any hour, and dismissed him. As Trajan came out of the préfect's office, Ferré, with two companions belonging to the secret Republican club, were passing into one of the city bureaus. The Republicans looked at Trajan in suspicious surprise, but he had no time to explain his presence in that compromising neighborhood.

Meanwhile little Amédée must be provided for. The mysterious letter in the wallet still lay unread. Before breaking the seal, Trajan passed a whole morning in a city library examining the files since the day he had come into possession of the treasure. There was no allusion to the loss. He went to the district police office where records and notices were made of matters of that sort. He even stated a supposititious case to the official, resembling as nearly as he dared make it the actual affair. The functionary examined the records carefully, incited by a liberal fee.

There was no trace. One entry struck Trajan as possibly having something to do with his *protégé*. His eye caught the word "suicide." The date was a fortnight after he had picked the child up in the streets. A woman had visited the bureau every day inquiring despairingly for a lost or stolen child. It had been entrusted to the guardianship of a washerwoman in the Rue St. Etienne. The police could get no clue to the lost boy, and the last line of the entry recorded the woman's suicide by charcoal in the Rue de Blois. Trajan copied this and asked the man if he remembered the circumstances. He did perfectly. "The woman was mad. The boy was without a father. She raved of his being a great nobleman and told us to seek him under the lilac where the nightingales sang. The case would have been dropped as a mad woman's fad, if on making inquiries in the Rue Etienne the loss of the child had not been verified. The woman,

who was honest, declared that the boy had been put to board with her by a servant. That a woman at intervals came to see it. She always came on foot and was constantly crazed with the idea that she was followed by the mad-house keeper."

"In taking the child one day on her rounds to gather the wash, the guardian lost him near the Hotel de Ville. She traced him as far as the Tuileries, but there at ten o'clock at night, she lost all signs of him. The woman came to take the child the next day, saying she was going on a journey. She fell into raging madness at first when she learned that he could not be found. She persisted in declaring that they had taken him and would keep him in the mad-house. She appeared here every night for ten days or two weeks, when we identified her with the suicide in the Rue de Blois. Her relations, or friends, denied any knowledge of the child, declaring that it had no claims upon them as the mother had never been married." Trajan went to the Rue Dragon morally certain that the lost child was Amédée, and he resolved to seek the washerwoman the next day. The letter, unaddressed, he felt that he had a right to read, as the surest way to lead to the restoration of the money. The envelope inclosed two notes. The first he opened held these words, in a woman's hand, and written with a lead pencil :

"I see your return in the journals. I am no longer responsible for my acts ; the police are on my track ; the people about me suspect you ; I can not speak to a stranger ; I can not go to the post ; I can not receive a letter. If I leave my room a minute I can see on returning that the spy has been here. I can live so no longer ; I will fly to some strange country ; give me money and I will quit Paris—France. The child is a healthy, robust little fellow ; he is your image. I dare not go to your quarters, nor dare I receive a messenger from you. Here is what I propose : Provide me with twenty-five thousand francs and I will take the boy and fly to England,

from there to New Orleans to my kindred. It would be useless to put this money in my hands, as they would instantly seize it. I am allowed to walk every evening after dark in the Luxembourg. I have for old-times' sake chosen the spot you know under the lilac branch where the letters used to be placed. Make up a packet and tie it to the branch between half-past eight and nine. I can, under cover of drawing the branch down to inhale the blossoms, cut the cord and slip the letter in my clothes. I see no other way of ending this vile bondage ; I know that my going will be a relief to you.

" With the amount of money I name I shall be out of want. In New Orleans I can find means to live, if that gives out before the hate of these fiends. I say not a word about the past ; it is dead for me, as it has long been for you. I am writing this in the bath and *he* is in the next room. I shall send it by the wash girl and I shall look in the lilac bush every evening for a week for an answer ; I know it will be there. Destroy, or, still better, return this letter ; my last experience warns me that the most harmless may compromise me. Finally, as it would not be safe to leave such a large sum unguarded, direct some one in whom you can confide to keep the place in sight and let no one molest it, who does not answer my description. I shall be dressed as when you saw me the last time. The person set to watch should not, of course, know that there is money. Send François, but let him disguise himself, for they would recognize him at once. François will think that it is a renewal of the old intrigue."

The second inclosure was but a few lines in a disguised hand, but not sufficiently so to conceal its business-like illegibility :

" I am greatly relieved to have you at last so reasonable. I very willingly deposit the sum you name, for the end you have in view. Any other use of it will involve you in worse than you have escaped, for I can no longer afford the scenes

of two years ago. Furthermore, supposing all else going well, you can never be secure with *that* hanging over you."

Trajan puzzled over the mystery of rehabilitating the two writers. What had befallen the wretched woman coming to the lilacs that night long ago and finding nothing? and the next and many more, until she despaired and ended the weary suspense in desperation perhaps. And he! What share of responsibility had he in this cruel comedy of woe?

He remembered that the wallet was on the ground, or dropped upon him as he fell over the back of the bench. Had he found it tied on the limb, as the letter directed, he wondered whether he would have touched it? Probably not, for he would have realized that it was placed there by agreement. But even then, the destined owner would not have gotten it, for he certainly would have remained to see what befell, and the poor morbid wretch, crazed with the notion that every one was put upon her as a spy, would have refused to touch it! No, the game begun in human guile had ended in providential interposition.

The same day he set out to discover the clue to Amédée. The washerwoman on the Rue St. Etienne could not be found. She had occupied a fifth floor, had quarreled with her lover, to whom she was not married, and had gone to another quarter of Paris to live. She had, of course, left no address, not caring to be plagued by the old love while on with the new. In the Rue de Blois the result was the same. Madame Drézé, who received the young man, did not attempt to conceal her hostility so soon as his errand was made known.

"Manifestly," he muttered, "Amédée is to be left to my care," and the thought gave him a new importance to himself. He would in future have another existence to provide for. He would rear the child on a perfect model. He should be the most learned, the most virtuous, the most manly little chap in all France, and when educated he should go home with him to New York and illustrate perfect manhood to the Manhattan sybarites! Then as the fabric grew and grew, he

bethought himself of the old saw about bachelors' and old maids' babies. But as this thought dampened his ardor, another, that made his step quicken and his eyes glisten, succeeded—possibly the reader suspects what it was. Edith would, had she been any where near him, I think!

That very day two thousand five hundred francs out of the twenty-five thousand were invested for the use of the boy, Trajan holding himself a guardian appointed by Providence, and the means a trust to enable him to carry out his *rôle.* He boldly christened the little man Drézé, and placed him in the infants' convent of St. Sulpice, until his own fortunes should be more settled. The little man howled lustily when Trajan got up to go. He clung to him screaming his little piteous plaints in the touching baby talk in which the French tongue is so copious, and it was only by lying down with the child, his arms clasped tightly about his neck until he slept, that Trajan finally managed to relinquish him to the kind fathers, whom he charged to be very tender and considerate towards the motherless child.

It was late in the afternoon of August 4th that, on returning to the Rue Dragon, Trajan found a man waiting for him in the little office of Madame Agay. He might have been the head clerk of a well-to-do notary or confidential agent of a banker. He bowed gravely as Madame Agay presented him to the young artist, and handed him a note, which he found on opening contained a line telling him that the bearer was instructed to conduct him to the presence of the empress-regent. In a few minutes Trajan was ready to accompany the austerely discreet guide, who called a cab and gave the coachman the order to drive to the Place Du Carrousel. Arrived there he dismissed the vehicle, waited until the man had driven off, then walked rapidly to the corner of the Tuileries known as the Pavilion de Flore. He seemed to be known by the guard at the door by some occult signal, and passed into the vestibule. In the ante-room, the lackey on duty gave him access

to the reception room. Here he left Trajan, telling him that he would be summoned in a few minutes. It was the wing of the palace occupied by the empress. There were a dozen or more seated on the settees, waiting their turn—some in uniforms and some civilians.

It was fully a half hour before the door opened and a page approaching Trajan, said in a low tone: "Will monsieur give himself the trouble to follow me?" They passed through a suite of sumptuous drawing-rooms, where on occasion of *fêtes* the empress received her guests. Finally he was shown to a seat in a boudoir-like apartment furnished in rosewood paneling with Japanese decorations on the walls and doors. He had been seated but a moment, when the curtains to the next-room were drawn aside by two pages, who held them apart as a lady, whom Trajan instantly recognized as the empress, entered. She turned and made a sign to the pages, and they disappeared. Trajan had arisen and stood in a respectful attitude waiting the sovereign's commands. As Eugénie advanced and fixed her eyes upon the young man, she started, with a puzzled expression, passed her hand over her eyes, as if trying to recall something—but gave it up. Then in a voice of rare sweetness and purity of tone, said:

"I seem to know your face, monsieur—but it is probably a fancy—you do not come to court?"

"No, madame, I have never been at court!"

"Nor, if I am correctly informed, do you believe in courts," she continued with a smile. "That, however, your manner tells. You, no doubt, wonder that your services are needed by our house. If you knew more of courts it would be no mystery to you. Kings are not served from conviction as Republics are. I am told that I may rely implicitly upon your devotion to our house so long as it represents France. That is all I ask. The emperor is surrounded by spies and enemies, some of them known, some only suspected, more unknown. The consequence is that every line sent him

from Paris is read in the Prussian headquarters, before he sees it himself. It has been of no use to send high officials of state, and now we have few to spare. I have documents of vital interest that must be in the emperor's hands before he engages the enemy. Perhaps it may stimulate you to your best endeavors if I let you know this much."

She paused, breathing rapidly, and just a shade of pallor on the fine lines of her lovely face. "The safety or destruction of Froissard's and MacMahon's armies depends upon the emperor's receiving certain ciphers I am about to entrust you, before the 6th—that is the day after to-morrow. To reach him you must quit Paris within two hours, and as you can have no official character it will depend upon your ingenuity and resolution to arrive at the emperor's person. You will receive certain verbal instructions from the agent who brought you here. Beyond that you will be without any means of making your mission a success. Do you consent, monsieur?"

Inclining deferentially, Trajan said in a clear voice:

"I accept, madame, and I engage, if my life is spared, that whatever papers you entrust to me shall be seen by no eyes nor known to any human soul through my instrumentality, until the sovereign of France has them in his own hands."

The empress hesitated a moment, studied the frank face before her, and said rapidly as she drew a packet from her bosom:

"It must be—I dare trust nobody else. But two people in France know the contents of these papers, myself and—one who is faithful to death. You are a Republican, as Barnave was when he put his devotion to France at the service of Marie Antoinette. Your service will hardly put you in the same peril, but it will make all France your debtor. It will save the lives of hundreds of thousands of men."

She placed the packet in the young man's hand, her eyes lingering on his face with an expression of solicitude.

Trajan bent very low as he received the trust, and answered firmly :

"You may consider the service done as you have ordered, if it be in the power of mortal to accomplish it."

The empress inclined her head slightly, made a gesture signifying that he should wait, and disappeared through the arras. A moment later, the discreet agent entered and handed the young man orders for the railway transportation, and a sum of money to procure horses where the rail was inaccessible or unavailable.

"In case you are stopped in the immediate circle of the emperor you can open all doors by this signal."

He tapped his forehead with the flat of his left hand.

"Then the other will say, 'Business with the emperor?' and you will respond, 'By his Majesty's wish.' Do not say command, for you will be repulsed."

He again showed him the signal and repeated the words.

"While you are talking with the person, as you utter the word majesty, change this ring," and he handed him a ring of gold, made of a coiled serpent, "from the left to the right second finger. The same tokens will give you access here, for a month, when they are useless, as others replace them."

CHAPTER XXV.

CÆSAR'S FORTUNES.

IT is, as I think I have already remarked in the progress of this history, the unexpected, the unforeseen that rules our lives. It is rarely our first love we marry ; our first faith the one we live or die in ; the calling we sigh for in youth does not absorb us in manhood ; the pleasure houses we build in our dreams never open a veritable door to us ; the beatitude that we most admire does not always rule our

conduct; the proverbs we most relish do not govern our actions. We are always turning to the right hand and the left, more intent on the surprises of our journey, than the prescribed courses we have marked out for our feet. It is not our favorite author we most diligently read, nor the political conviction that aroused our young enthusiasm we sustain. We grow in action and conduct as in body and mind.

The moral physiognomy changes as visibly as the physical. We are not even the dim echoes of our mental past, any more than the bodily likeness of our younger years. What a world it would be, if we did not suffer this subtle change? Sometimes insensible, sometimes revolutionary! Many of us advance in the unknown stream, oblivious as the rower, who to go on now, must sit with his back to the point of direction—the bark of life is thus propelled—hope at the helm and ignorance at the oars! Or, if we take the figure of the poets with Time as the tamer, holding the bits in our mouths, as we curvet over the hills and vales, how helpless we are in the course, curbed in by invisible lines, environed by intangible barriers. Chance, the jockey of Time, pushes us on by whip and spur. When the steed is caparisoned for the arena, the lance side is blindfolded to shut out the vision of the bull plunging to the encounter with swelling neck and lowered head, it is not until his side is torn by the cruel horns that the impatient charger comprehends the danger.

It is thus that Fate, kindly or cruelly, sends us to our encounters, conscious only of combat and difficulty, blinded to the acutest of our dangers. How many duels would be fought, if the duelist could foresee the end? How many wars would be declared, if clairvoyance were part of the science of diplomacy? Before the gods were exiled by the conquering processes of Christianity, it was by equivocation that the oracles involved their dupes in warfare. When Crœsus set out against Darius he was inveigled into the enterprise by the deluding Python's declaration that

"A great empire would be brought to an end by his decision," but he did not suspect, until his army was swept away, that it was his own empire that was to go down in the battle, and make good the prophecy!

There is a certain ideal purpose around which the generous impulses of every life move during the ripening processes of the mind. Though shadowy and undefined, we make this the pivot of our aspirations, motives, yearnings, as the starry system has its central orbit. Trajan's intellectual existence up to this stage had been more subjective than objective. He lived more in the ideal than in the imaginary. He confused life with its abstractions.

He saw nothing compromising to the principle he held essential for the realization of his ideal estate, in serving heartily and loyally the instruments of an order of things totally opposed to his own profoundest conviction. He was like a Mussulman who takes service under the hated Gaiour to save Islam from a more threatening heretic, firmly confident that Allah and the prophet will in their own good time rescue the crescent from the cross. Some such thoughts as these passed through his mind as he hastened from the Tuileries to the Rue Dragon. There was short time for reflection, however. He stopped on his way at the rendezvous in the Rue Jacob, where by a fortunate chance he encountered Belcour.

That fantastic patriot had been transformed into a warrior since his last appearance, and informed Trajan with airy conviction that he was to set out next day on the march to Berlin. All the students had been accepted as volunteers in regiments of their choice, the authorities distrustingly declining their proffer to serve as an independent battalion.

Though deeply affronted by the suspicion involved in this dispersion, their patriotism was too sincere to admit of drawing back. Trajan was greatly relieved at this intelligence, for he, too, was in honor bound to join the corps had it been accepted independently. The event simplified

his situation immensely, and, begging his comrade to accompany him, he explained his present mission as far as he dared, and charged him to remit a written statement which he had prepared to Gambetta, who was the titular chief of the Republican Club. Belcour was puzzled, but his confidence in his friend was so strong that he would have trusted him had he put the badge of the Bonapartes on his sleeve.

"I shall expect to meet you in Berlin," he said, as he took leave of Trajan at the Rue de Dragon, "and I shall keep notes of all I see, that you may electrify your countrymen by the most brilliant and exact *feuilletons* from the campaign"—for he suspected that the American's *démarche*, as he confided to the *camarades*, was entirely in the interest of the New York journal to which he sent occasional letters.

Greatly relieved by this meeting with Belcour, Trajan mounted to his studio. There were two letters awaiting him on the mantel, superscribed in hands he did not recognize. The post-mark Crécy threw him into a delicious agitation. He suspected who had written one of them but, strange to say, did not hasten to open it. His mission, the pressing urgency of the empress, every thing passed from his mind. He sank luxuriously in the cushions of the divan where the afternoon sun streamed, conjuring all sorts of fairy forms on the tapestries. He looked guiltily around the room as he pressed the envelope to his lips, and then, slipping the talisman in his vest, broke the seal of the second letter. The signature was Kate's, and it merely said that all was going well at Crécy, save Aunt Briscoe, who was aghast over very bad news she refused to explain. Kate promised him some interesting gossip before long, and meanwhile encouraged him to expect an event which would "open that lad" Elliot's blind eyes to the folly he was perpetrating.

Trajan could not imagine what his eager partisan meant, but he laughed as he figured to himself a contest of wits between the astute Theo and this alert enemy. The

signature at the end of the second letter, which was longer, was not a surprise.

"I write you, dear Trajan," the latter said, "on the suggestion of mamma and Aunt Caroline, to say that you acted *very, very* foolishly. Bella was so indignant when she found you were gone that she gave orders at once for the carriage to take her mother and herself to the station. She declared that if it had been made so disagreeable for you here that you could not remain, it was her duty to follow you to Paris and prove to you that you had *one* devoted friend who knew what *noble* conduct is. *Somebody* was very indignant when she heard Bella talking like that, and if Aunt Caroline had not called Bella away and persuaded her into silence, it would not have been Bella nor her mother that had taken the next train for Paris!"

Betty, aroused from her afternoon nap, had been vainly endeavoring to secure her favorite place on her master's knee, but, scandalized by his conduct, withdrew and sat on the rug at some distance, pretending that the operation of washing her face for the moment prevented her accustomed attentions to the master. It was the rapturous pressing of the sheet to his lips which surprised the circumspect Betty, who had never seen an artist indulge in this ridiculous pantomime before, and didn't know what to make of it.

"Though no explanations have been made," the letter continued, "every body knows that *Somebody* has added martyrdom to heroism. For the present an evil power is over E——. He is blinded by the wiles of a wicked person. But he is an angel, and he will soon see the wrong he has done, and then, being the noblest and best, or *next* to the noblest and best man in the world, he will efface his *cruel* conduct by the most perfect repentance. *Somebody* keeps a certain letter always near her heart and thinks day and night of the dear writer, and sighs for the time when she can look into his dear eyes and tell him ever so much that she dare not write."

And so runs the heart's overflow in these foolish, sacred prattlings, which, like a prayer, I protest I can not profane by setting down here, in the nakedness of type. As I read the yellow, faded lines and look yonder at a pair of tranquil blue eyes, the larks sing over the meadow, the brook purls its restful drone under the alders, and the valley of my youth swims blooming and odorous in the mists that blind my drooling eyes. Perhaps there were tears, too, in Trajan's eyes as he read the tender tale. But they were not bitter or salty. There was a roseate color in the atmosphere as he reluctantly folded the sheets and laid them carefully in his treasure-box, where the pulsations of the heart might keep the words alive. The clock on the mantel warned him that he had no time, even for the delicious reverie he felt in the mood to indulge. He must be at the Northern Station at six, and it was now five o'clock. His few preparations were soon finished, and commending Betty and Trip to Madame Agay's good offices, he set out buoyantly for the wars.

There is no time to embalm in this history the adventures of the next four weeks, wherein Trajan actually became the confidant of the helpless and betrayed emperor, nor the stirring scene near Metz where Trajan's knowledge of the German tongue enabled him to snatch the imperial unfortunate from the very hands of a German picket that had unknowingly surprised and surrounded the emperor and his suite. It was not until Napoléon's destiny was settled at Sédan that Trajan quit him, bearing a note to the empress bidding her trust implicitly in the young American, in the event of serious danger to herself.

Early on the evening of September 3d, Trajan reached Paris again, where the news of the surrender at Sédan seemed not to be known. He made straight for the Tuileries, where, though no one seemed to know the event, the spirit of disaster filled the air. By means of a peculiar sign entrusted him at the last moment by the emperor, Trajan

penetrated to the white drawing-room adjoining the boudoir of the empress. The sesamé was a red card, inclosed in an oval glass medallion, upon which there was no word written —merely a wide open eye engraved. When this was shown, the guards, lackeys and functionaries fell back in respectful awe.

The grand apartment was not lighted, but the glow of the sunset filled the place with a soft, luxuriant radiance. The curtains he remembered so well were raised, and a slim figure in a plain black dress came into the room with an eager but weary step. Trajan looked at her curiously, wondering why the empress had sent a stranger to see a messenger who was the last to hold personal intercourse with the emperor. The woman's form was strangely familiar. Her hair was almost white, the face was haggard, deep lines were under the large, heavy eyes. The dress was a plain black cashmere. Trajan started and bent his knee with irrestrainable reverence. He detected in the sad smile that the plain, grief-worn figure before him was the beautiful empress he left in the same room four weeks before—such a vision as Burke saw when his eyes rested on Marie Antoinette at Versailles, transformed to the widowed queen, who laid her white hair and haggard face on the block five years later.

"Oh—madame—your Majesty—" Trajan had never given her the reverential title before; he had avoided using it to her husband—"I—I—did not recognize you—"

"You are from the emperor—is it really true? Were you at Sédan! Say that it is a tale of our enemies—say that he is dead—that he died at the head of the guards—God forgive me, I could bear that! Say he did not hand his sword to that odious Prussian Tartuffe!"

Trajan begged the unhappy lady to be seated and receive the emperor's message. He gave her the letter, which had been sewed in his sleeve, written at Méziéres by the emperor. It was but a few lines. The poor woman pressed it to her lips and sobbed silently. Trajan then related all that he

had seen and done since his departure on the 4th of August, a month before. He touched upon the emperor's unhappy and anomalous position after the delegation of the command to Bazaine—his mortal agony when his judgment had been overruled in Paris—his pathetic resignation and chivalrous conduct on the march and during the trying encounter with the Uhlans in the flight to Verdun. It was quite dark in the apartment when the singular narrative had come to an end. The empress sat a long time silent. The entrance of a lady of the suite, Madame Carette, aroused the regent. She turned to the lady and said in a calm, sad tone:

"The dreadful news is true; here is a messenger from the emperor. I have a note written on the 31st, telling of his purpose to put himself in the way of death the next day, knowing that the battle must be lost. The guard which he commanded in person has been cut to pieces, but he could not die. Oh—my God—my God—have we sinned so deeply—could our punishment not come in some other form!"

She broke into a paroxysm of sobs. Madame Carette wound her arms tenderly about the stricken woman and soothed her like a child. She brushed her eyes, suddenly, and rising said bitterly:

"Here is a Republican who has gone through fire and danger for the emperor and for me—what do you think of that? He is a Republican. He belongs to the "Treize" who have sworn to establish the Republic. He rescued the emperor from a Prussian patrol near Metz. He has pushed through the Prussian lines and has been a month at our services. Madame Carette, I wish all France were Republican, if this hero is a type of that faith." Then going over to Trajan she asked excitedly: "What now? Do you go to proclaim the Republic? Have you ended allegiance to the unfortunate? Can we no longer trust to your courage and devotion, now that we need it more than ever?"

"Madame, my word is pledged to the emperor that no harm shall come to you. I now repeat that pledge. Whatever befalls you, all that I am, all that I can do, is at your command."

"*Trés bien;* listen! this news is not known beyond General Montauban and myself. I have his promise to withhold it forty-eight hours. I dare not trust my countrymen if the worst comes to the worst. I have already four friends, foreigners, sworn to protect me, if—if the worst should happen. Madame Carette will put you into relation with the one I most trust, a young Englishman, who has secured quarters in case I am compelled to leave here—for I am determined that not a drop of French blood shall be shed for me or mine. Monsieur, are you willing to co-operate with the dynasty to that extent?" She held out the hand that two months before the proudest potentate would have felt honored to touch. Trajan pressed his lips to it and said gently, "Madame, your own son could not promise with a sincerer heart."

She sighed, turned, and withdrew. Madame Carette, taking up the conversation as if the empress had just finished, said:

"The Englishman her majesty refers to is lodging just across the Rue Rivoli at the Hotel Wagram. Go to him at once. Take up your quarters there. I will give you a note of presentation. He will put you *au courant* with the situation. Should the empress summon you again, be discreet. She does not realize her danger. Half the bad news from the army is kept from her. She does not know that even Count Palikao has been deceiving her and is deceiving her now. Trochu, too, is playing double. It may be necessary for her to fly from the palace to-night. You must be near —Mr. Rawdon (that is our English ally) knows the signal."

She sat down as she spoke and wrote a few lines on a card.

"This will be all you need. Above all, do not spread the report of the surrender to-night, until measures have been

taken to get the garrison in from Vincennes to protect the palace."

She rose, bowed ceremoniously, and retired through the same curtained entrance. Stunned by the evidences of a collapse, illustrating as he never realized it before, the hollowness and vanity of human greatness, Trajan walked to the window and looked out. The streets were filled with uneasy crowds. The lights were flashing along the quais. He started with a sharp pang. He was just above the Sphinx, before which he had seen Cæsar pass three months before when the court withdrew for the summer to St. Cloud. Then a word from the radiant empress would have been law to all France; now it was to him that she uttered the prayer of the helpless.

Mistakes in life are like mile-stones on the highway—one can make no use of them until we are abreast of or pass them. Trajan thought of this as he meditated on the fabric he saw tottering about him. He wondered if the emperor, like the poet, was musing over his perverted manhood and wayward youth, seeking in vain in all his career for any evidence of his past conduct based on truth. His wild excesses, stupendous successes, deep draughts of every bowl that the reveler holds to be joy; the fever of youth cooled in the ample glories of wizard might; chivalrous impulses and magnanimous enterprises, Italy redeemed and revived—the protection of England in her political paralysis; the strong rock of the feeble states, the despot of his own—a foul manhood resurrected from ignoble debauchery by one colossal crime—the theft of his countrymen's liberty. Paris bedizined, the Circean cave of the world, where the senses were imbruted and the virtues stupefied; all this—the past of Bonaparte, Trajan conjured as he hurried on his new mission.

He arrived at the Hotel Wagram and in a few minutes was shown into Mr. Rawdon's presence. He was a stout florid young fellow of the ordinary beefy English type,

large honest blue eyes, with white lashes and curly sunny hair. He could not have been more than twenty-five, though his stature, six feet or more, gave him an older look.

"I see," he said in the frank tone of a Briton, "from Madame Carette's note that you have been enlisted in the good cause. I think we shall have desperate work to rescue the empress. Poor woman, she has no idea of how critically she is fixed. Since Woerth and Gravelotte she has been in constant danger of her life. At first it was thought the fellows made rich by the eighteen years' pillage of the empire would stand up to her. But when the Reds made the attack at La Villette on the 13th, they fled to hiding like so many rabbits. One set of them actually proposed an abdication, and a substitution of that disreputable sneak, Plon-Plon. It was all arranged, when Pietri—who alone resists the rule of the ingrate, put the whole affair in the hands of Palikao, the prime minister. The dastardly business was kept from the empress, and on the very next day, the 14th, when news came that Bazaine had driven the Prussians across the Moselle, these sneaks crowded the Tuileries to pay court to the star for a moment emerged from eclipse."

"You don't mean to say that the head of the government was kept in the dark as to events going on in the capital as well as to the defeats of the army? for the action of the 14th was the fatal one that cut off Bazaine from Verdun."

"That's just what I mean. Most of the news she has received has been by way of London, where she has very warm friends. That luckless morning of the 14th I was in the palace officially. Imagine my surprise as I stood in the guard-room when I saw the empress enter among the soldiers, some of them with their coats off, others cleaning their arms, others lying in their cots. Her hair was hanging down in disorder. She waved a telegram triumphantly and cried out, her voice broken with emotion—"Soldiers, the Prussians are defeated. They have been driven into the quarries of Jaumont." She was half mad with joy,

for since her return from St. Cloud on the 7th, her mind had been filled with forebodings. She was swayed alternately with a feverish desire to fly and join the emperor and her son, or enter a convent.

"I have been on confidential terms with the Duke de Persigny for some years and acted as his secretary in English affairs. So soon as news came of the first defeats, he saw the game was ended, and the first thing he did was to drive with me to the Tuileries to get Conti, the emperor's secretary, to extract some compromising papers from the Interior Office. Conti, too, knew what was coming. For four weeks he has been getting rid of tell-tale documents. But it is no easy job. Had they been carried off in carts, the sharp-eyed opposition would have set up an outcry. If they had been burned, there would have been clouds of smoke revealing the work.

"I have been with him for days at a time under lock and key. We have torn up heaps of letters—the accumulations of twenty years—with incriminating documents, which would put some of the Republican chiefs in a very compromising plight, particularly that old humbug Thiers, who has repeatedly offered his services to the emperor as minister. Oh, they are a nice lot, these Frenchmen! There isn't an Imperialist that wouldn't turn Terrorist to-morrow nor a Red that wouldn't swear on the Bonaparte bees for a portfolio!"

Trajan smiled. "You have a poor opinion of the people who have given the world the doctrine of liberty, which they have not learned to practice themselves."

"Ho, ho! So you are a Republican?" He laughed uproariously. "By Jove, it is odd. I incline that way, and all the people in the emperor's confidence are touched with the craze. You know the admiration of Eugénie for Marie Antoinette, and the jokes of the Bonaparte family who hate her, that she's a Legitimist at heart? Well, she has gotten into her head that she is to be torn in pieces by the

mob. She shifts between a mad purpose to cut stick and a sanguinary plot to arrest all the opposition and have them shot, as the city is under martial law. But Lord bless you! She wouldn't lift her neck from the guillotine if the doing it would bring a soul to jeopard. I was sent for the day of the second defeat at Gravelotte. I found her in deep black—all the court, down to the flunkies, have been in black since Woerth. She was in tears, poring over the chapter in Thiers, where the massacre of the Swiss at the palace doors is described. The night of the 14th the last State reception was to be held. The empress was clad in black, from a jet coronet on her head to black stockings and shoes.

"The Ministers, as I say, had doctored the news and made the Rezonville and Bar le Duc affairs a great victory, instead of a mere repulse of the Prussian vanguard. The buzzards were all out in force. The gayety was sober but sustained. I am glad I saw the poor creature that night. When I saw her again the glorious auburn hair was silvered, the eyes were shrunken, the peachy complexion was wan and the face haggard. She was thrown into spasms by remarking sinister eyes continually watching the palace windows. Pietri soon put an end to that. Five hundred guards in civilians' uniforms constantly patrol the palace.

"They have signs and pass-words like a secret society, and suspicious personages are dogged in every movement. But some of these shady protectors are themselves suspected, and the foreign band, of whom you and I are part, are chosen to risk all when the situation becomes desperate. I will show you one means of communication." He arose and went to the window, pulled the shade half aside twice, then drew it all the way up. "Now watch the third window from the river facing on the garden. Do you see?"

"Yes, the shade moves aside once, twice, three times; now it flies up," said Trajan. "What does that imply?"

"All is well and wait. When it is daylight the signal is replaced by a flag, though that is regarded as risky. The men whom the empress relies on most unquestionably are the Corsicans, of whom there are fifty under Pietri, but they are hard to use, as their dark features betray them. Now I will apprise you of the work entrusted us, and then I have done. Rooms have been prepared at the Convent Des Abeilles, Rue Picpus, far out in the environs near the wood of Vincennes. I am charged with that. The Mother Superior has given me keys to the establishment and I can slip the empress in there at a moment's notice. The convent takes up two sides of a square. An old postern that has not been opened for a century has been masked up; I'm a bit of a carpenter myself and I did the work one dark night.

"In case of pursuit we can slip into the alley, and the empress will disappear before any one dreams of the means. Twenty horses have been taken from the imperial stables, the fastest of all the stud. They stand harnessed night and day to common street cabs within two minutes' walk of the Louvre and the Tuileries. At the Hotel du Louvre a friend of mine is stationed just as I am here. His signal is a card in his window answered by another in the Louvre Library. *Enfin* you are just in time. There will be trouble to-night, I fear. We will relieve each other in watching. You take up your beat under the colonnade of the Louvre, I will walk this end. You will see others near you, but make no sign."

"I shall have to take a mouthful to eat first," said Trajan, "as I have, I may say, not dined for a month." A dinner was soon brought to the room, the young Englishman keeping an eye at the window on the garden opposite. It was eight o'clock when Trajan began his novel function. He paced up and down the gay colonnades of the Rue de Rivoli, crossing over occasionally to note his fellow companion's presence in the window. He was obviously a poor

hand at the work, for he noticed that by ten o'clock several suspicious looking persons were scrutinizing him. He had marched down leisurely as far as the lower end of the Louvre for perhaps the twentieth time, when two men hustled against him. A low voice whispered in his ear: "Make no noise. Stir but a hand and you are a dead man."

A cab was standing ten feet off; he was hurried into it and driven to the cabinet of the chief of police. Pietri was not in, but his deputy was on duty. Trajan was questioned as to his movements, and suddenly recalling the imperial talisman, exhibited it to the deputy. The effect was grotesque. The functionary, hitherto seated and impassive, arose deferentially, apologized in a frightened sort of way, and ordered the officers to conduct him back to his station. When Trajan resumed his vigils, he was joined by the Englishman, who laughed heartily at the incident and related experiences of his own not unlike it.

"The regular detectives, spies, guards, or whatever you choose to call them, are jealous and suspicious. They no doubt gave you all the signals as they remarked you on duty, and finding you ignorant took you for an interloper bent on mischief. I sincerely pity that poor woman yonder," he said, pointing over his shoulder.

"Do you know that while we have been reducing tons of documents to pulp and making way with them, she has not sent a pennyworth away, such is her absurd confidence! She has the richest wardrobe in Europe. Her personal allowance is two hundred and fifty thousand dollars a year and she spends every penny of it in dress and charities. Not that she cares so much for the dresses, but it keeps business brisk. She has indirectly given work to thousands of seamstresses, and by her example made a hundred-fold more. Her bills at Worth's alone, some of which I came across in my work in the Cabinet, ran up to five hundred pounds a month. Her charities last

year were twenty-five thousand pounds! Much of the emperor's valuables have been sent away in small packets.

"Every body that Conti can trust takes a package of letters and papers out of the palace as often as he or she has occasion to visit it. But it would require six months' work and ten hours a day to assort and take away the valuable papers. What a life that poor woman has led since she came back from St. Cloud! I am with Conti every morning at six. At seven the empress in a simple black gown, such as my governess used to wear, sits down to coffee with Madame Le Breton, Bourbaki's sister and Madame Carette.

"Sitting there with her white cuffs and white collar, she looks like a prim housekeeper. At half-past seven her almoner Monseigneur Boner, a remarkable preacher, says mass in the private chapel, the empress kneeling during the entire ceremony. Madame Carette is the most brilliant woman I ever heard talk. She strives to keep her little circle gay, but her sallies often bring tears rather than mirth to her mistress' eyes. After mass she devotes herself to business, and even Bismarck would shrink from the labors that poor little woman sits out from day to day. I have been there from eight o'clock in the morning until seven in the evening, and beyond swallowing a cup of coffee she has never budged."

"But what business can she do—where are the ministers?"

"Ah—the present ministry is a mere sham. Palikao is an honest, rough old fellow who hasn't an idea of business. He merely signs papers presented by the secretaries, and nice work he has given his sign manual to."

At this moment, Rawdon stopped and looked at the window of the Pavilion.

"There is the signal," he said breathlessly. "Now for work. You may be sure something is up, or it would not be there, for it is now past eleven. Come."

They passed in through the garden gates. Crowds of idle preoccupied people were coming and going. Ministers' car-

riages stood deep in the square of the Carrousel. A display of their secret tokens carried the two young men through the lines of weary and sleepy lackeys. They reached the Pavilion de Flore, the empress' apartments, and mingled with the throng. Ministers, generals and officials of all grades were lolling about talking in whispers. The news from Sédan, though not officially promulgated, was mysteriously known. Madame Le Breton appeared in the room as if searching for some one. Rawdon walked over to her, and in a moment nodded to Trajan to follow him. They entered the boudoir finished in panels whereon the loves of the roses and violets were painted in exquisite tints by Chaplin. The apartment was deserted. The Venetian windows leading to the balcony were open, and the shadow of a figure in black could be discerned leaning against the rail.

Madame Le Breton went out and returning in a moment beckoned to the young men to follow.

The empress did not turn, and they stood perfectly still. The city was profoundly quiet. The gardens echoed only to the soft plash of the fountains; the Champs Élysées stretched like a broad causeway of cloud between the double lines of flaming jets to the dim shadow of the great arch of the stars at the other end. The river flowed peacefully by, its ridged ripples crossed by long rays of light thrown from the lamps on its banks. The regular footfall of the sentries as they paced up and down under the balcony was the only sign of life in the restful atmosphere.

The miserable mistress of all this grandeur turned suddenly to the young men, and said in a broken, husky voice:

"They tell me that this château can be defended against all the rabble of Paris. You are foreigners—you can look on from the outside—would you do it? Would you defend what is not worth defending, if it must be held at the cost of blood?" She waited a moment, then added, a tinge of bitterness in the broken voice: "Have you become courtiers too? Is it then true that rulers can never learn the truth

until it is too late? If we had known in July what we know now, do you suppose we should ever have fallen into M. de Bismarck's trap? But he knew—he knew—Oh, my God, every body knew but those who should have known first!" She looked off over the city toward the threatening towers of the prison across the water, where Marie Antoinette had wasted her widowhood in squalor. She shuddered and hastily entered the room. The young men followed. Rawdon, raising his voice, said gently:

"Your majesty, the truth is easily told. When the news from Sédan is confirmed to-morrow to the city, which already knows it vaguely—you can remain here only by girdling your power with bayonets and forcing truce with shrapnel."

"Ah—Mon Dieu—Mon Dieu! I can never do that. But," she added suddenly, as if for the first time realizing the fact, "you are Republicans—you desire our overthrow—you would not join such a movement, why then should you fancy your friends would attack?"

"Your majesty forgets that at such times it is not the theorists like myself and monsieur here who control; it is the mob, who have but a brutal instinct and know no way but force to bring about their wishes. I think I can speak for my friend," he added, nodding to Trajan, who assented, "when I say that we would overturn the empire, but we should do it by votes, never otherwise, because there is no stability in any other form. That is why I venture to remind your majesty that the empire saved by bayonets would be as insecure the day after as it is to-day."

"But I will ride out at the head of the troops in the morning. I will go in person to the Legislature and dismiss it. I will institute a new Council of Regency under Thiers—whom I despise—I will—but this is not what I begged your attendance for. I have frightful forebodings, and I ask you to remain in the palace to-night. I shall decide in the morning what to do. No matter who comes, or what happens, I

request that one or the other of you will be within hearing of my voice, that one at least of you never lose sight of my person."

At that moment Pietri entered unannounced. He walked straight to the empress and asked a question in a low voice. She shook her head. The empress requested all to be seated and then said aloud:

"Monsieur Pietri, speak freely before these gentlemen. They are true friends, they have been tested."

Pietri, covering his face from the light, answered in a low voice: "There is not much to be said. You sent orders to Trochu to attend you here. Your first messenger was told that he was out. The second, that he had retired and was not to be disturbed for *any body*. When those messages came, Trochu was in consultation with Thiers and that group. It was decided that Thiers would accept the presidency of the council, if the emperor abdicated in favor of the prince imperial—and the Legislature were dissolved. Orders were written early in the evening to Marshal Baraguy d'Hilliers to have the garrison of Paris in the Champs Elysée and the gardens at daylight. The orders have not reached him, and if sent now they could not be carried out because Trochu would not countersign them."

"Then I am at the mercy of the mob in the morning!" exclaimed the empress starting up.

"Your majesty is at the mercy of your enemies, should the arms and resources of your friends fail," answered the Corsican bluntly.

The regent rose and paced the room in weary abstraction. The coming and going in the outer rooms sounded faintly in this solemn chamber. Madame Le Breton, worn out with fatigue, was sleeping tranquilly in her chair. Pietri got up and drew back the curtains to the outer *salon*. The apartments were still filled. Senators and officers were stretched upon every available bit of furniture, dozing or lost in panic. Lackeys leaned against the walls sound

asleep. The chill night air came in fitful gusts through the long windows, breathing the lingering perfumes of the orange trees. Messengers came and went incessantly from the office of the secretary, who occasionally rose to hand a despatch to his mistress. The night wore on. The empress, too anxious to sleep, either walked the room or cooled her fever on the balcony. It was a little after six in the morning when Pietri had gone, that Emile Girardin, the journalist and senator, was announced. He demanded a word with the regent.

"Ah," said she bitterly, "the grave-digger of dynasties," alluding to Girardin's appearance at the Tuileries in the self-same way on the morning in 1848 when Louis Philippe was packing his bag to fly—as John Smith. The empress had guessed correctly. Girardin, with his professor's face, his scrupulous attire, his rosette of the Legion in his button-hole, came forward, dapper, cheery, confident, his smooth-shaven, young face as serene as if he had just pocketed his last great haul in a profligate's speculation. He came to tell the empress Thiers' proposition.

She laughed sadly, and said with a flash of her old spirit: "Thiers is a trump you always hold in your hand to play in a risky game." Girardin, a man of wit, was not disconcerted at this sally, and proceeded to expound the judiciousness of bringing the malcontents into the government and inviting France to repel the invaders. "Do this at once," he continued; "put yourself at the head of the troops, ride like the heroine you are, to the Corps Legislatif, dissolve that body of dolts that every one despises, and all France will rally around you as the Hungarians rallied around the Austrian empire, when they swore to defend their woman-king, Maria Thérésa."

The heavy eyes of the poor lady brightened. She liked the counsel. She would do it. Girardin rising to go, added: "If your majesty appears on horseback, like the chivalric Austrian, or Bess of England, fearlessly among the

people of Paris, you may count on their enthusiasm and loyalty. But," he added, coming back, "you must first take a sleeping potion and gain a few hours' rest, for Paris knows its empress as the queen of beauty first, and the sovereign afterward. Do this, and my word for it all will go well."

He left the room, and the empress with an almost radiant smile sat quite still watching the door where he had disappeared, lost in reverie. She was trembling with the tension of the night. But she could not lie down. She rose and touched Madame Le Breton lightly, but that jaded woman was in such a sound and refreshing sleep that she had not the heart to disturb her. She glanced at the two young men seated by the window, and said almost gayly :

"Come, messieurs, I must make use of you for my new *rôle*. Come and help me select a costume." She led them into her wardrobe and asked them to help her take down the gowns hanging on the outer rows. She worked diligently at this for twenty minutes or more, but the garments she wanted were not there. A few days before there had been a general stampede of servants, who had gone off carrying great quantities of imperial property. Probably the dark riding dress she was seeking had been among the spoils of her domestics.

The only gown that appeared suitable was of green cloth, trimmed with gold, but in laying it over a chair she decided that it would be too theatrical for such a solemn pageant. It had been her riding robe in her last *fêtes* at Fontainebleau, and accorded incongruously with such solemn work as was before her. The young men were not adepts in finery and could give the royal lady no advice. What grotesque mischances mar great destinies and shift potent purposes. No robe suitable for the Jeanne d'Arc enterprise could be found among the rifled finery of the most lavish wardrobe in Europe. The lack of a petticoat—on the testimony of Thiers himself, who spoke of it afterward, brought about the expulsion of the dynasty—for had the woman, pathetic in her misfortune, ridden out among the

multitude, like Elizabeth, to Tilbury fort, the chivalrous sentiment of Paris would have acclaimed her, and the history of a people would have been written in less lurid colors.

CHAPTER XXVI.

AN IMPERIAL VICTIM.

THAT somber night and sinister morning movement filled the mind of the young and ardent Trajan with conflicting emotions. The prepossessions of his life were not a whit altered or shaken by the spectacle of helpless royalty amid the wreck of its grandeur. If he thought of the political aspect of the matter at all, it was with a sense of its remoteness to the conditions before him. Here, all that he realized was the peril of a helpless woman : the madness of a blinded people. He forgot during that night of trial and miserable uncertainty, that he was in the very sanctuary of imperialism ; that he was assisting at the vicarious passion and expiation of a great crime. Unconscious of the influence the episode was to have on his own future, he played his part as a spectator, impotent to avert the looming catastrophe, resolute only to circumscribe its horror, if mortal courage could do it. He returned with Rawdon and the empress to the apartment, now beginning to look garish and slovenly as the sunshine streamed in. The *débris* of a week's occupation was on the tables, the furniture, the floors ; for, characteristically, even the domestics, sniffing the coming change, had been for ten days deserting their posts, and the service of the palace had fallen into suggestive desuetude.

As Madame Le Breton arose, refreshed from her timely nap, chocolate was brought in, and the four singularly united relics of a great dynasty drank in silence from the pretty Sevrès cups, that in happier days a Mérimée had immortalized in verse, a Gauthier had embalmed in fanciful comedy.

After the apparition of Girardin there was a singular calm; even the movement of the worn and sleepy lackeys ceased. The regent's secretary alone continued his offices silently, decorously, faithfully. The poor lady at last said, as he came in to lay some papers for her hand to sign:

"Monsieur, you must be worn out, take some rest. These gentlemen will replace you for a few hours if there is any thing that must be done." He bowed with deep emotion and shook his head. He needed no rest, he said, he would remain at his post while majesty refused to retire. Presently the ladies of the court came in. Mass was said in the chapel, the two Protestants kneeling reverently while the slim figure in black remained as if transfixed on the *prie dieu*, during the short ceremony. Trajan returning to the window stepped out upon the balcony. It was eight o'clock.

The streets were in their usual morning bustle. No sign of danger yet. Then his mind returned to the whimsical incident of the robe the royal lady had sought. Was it a fatality that out of three hundred and sixty costumes, the needed one was not to be found! His mind recalled the grotesque chances that turn great events out of their ordained courses. Would the dark robe the empress had fixed her mind upon, have spared Paris the anarchy and desecration of impotent revolution and perhaps anarchy? He thought over the same thing many a time afterward, when the first intoxicating draught of its power had led the mob to the saturnalia of crime that set the world shuddering. The vision of faded loveliness the imperial lady still presented—would it have touched the generous, mercurial Parisians and held them to their allegiance? Was this trifle, after all, to be as potent as the lost battles of the month in bringing on imperial dissolution?

Meanwhile the life of the court, or a ghastly shadow of it, began again. Ministers, gloomy, furtive, reticent, came in perfunctorily, transacted business briefly, and withdrew. Veterans of the Crimea and Italy came to protest their

devotion and plead for a chance to attest their valor, though crippled and worn. Envoys from Thiers and Gambetta came with warnings that the regent's friends should prepare for the worst. Trochu had sullenly refused to attend his imperial mistress. The soldiers ordered into the Place de la Concorde do not appear. By noon the gardens in front of the palace are filled with a vast multitude, who move about talking, talking, always talking, the ominous chatter that precedes the thought simmering in the hot-head of the Parisian. Word comes that even De Palikao has broken faith.

He had plighted his word to say nothing in the Corps Legislatif of the surrender at Sédan, until the regent could devise measures. He had told all. The *déchéance* of the dynasty had been declared. The news of it was now in the streets. The fire was on the straggling grains ; in a moment it would reach the mountain of powder. At one o'clock the empress, colorless, haggard, tearless, dragged herself to the window, Trajan trying vainly to dissuade her. She waved him back, saying in English : "Have no fear, I'm not going to commit any Gallic folly. I shall go mad with this suspense." Her eye fell upon the gardens and the miles thence westward to the arch along the Champs Élysée.

She gasped, uttered a low moan, and would have fallen if Madam La Breton had not caught her. She refused to quit the window, fascinated by the horror the spectacle suggested. Two square miles packed with people lay at her feet, under her window, surging and waving, to the great square, across the bridges, along the river, along the Rue de Rivoli. Not a soldier to be seen save at the gates, where the guards of the line were jostled aside and companies of the new National Guard—Republicans—were installed in their stead. Trajan with gentle force drew the curtains, and by an imploring gesture to Madam Le Breton forced her away from the sinister spectacle. At this moment there was a clamor in the outer apartment. Two men entered, one

was Pietri, and Trajan with surprise recognized Jules in the second. Pietri spoke rapidly and in agitation. The expulsion of the dynasty had been proposed and would be voted so soon as the question was put. The soldiers were every where fraternizing with the revolutionists. Rochefort had been taken out of prison. Then in a low tone—"Your majesty is no longer safe. Crowds are already before the guard room and in the Place du Carrousel. The Count de Cossé-Brisac is acting like a madman with a group of young noblemen in the hallway. They are flourishing pistols and threatening to provoke bloodshed—"

"That must be instantly stopped. Go to them and say for me, that I beseech them to make no sign of hostility, to shed blood under no provocation." Going to a cabinet, she opened a drawer and took out an opera glass. With this she swept the sea of faces stretching far under the trees to the Place de la Concorde. She uttered a cry of indignation and loathing, pointing to a group near the statuary a few steps from the fountain. Trajan looked and saw a tall figure, armed and resolute, parleying with the crowd.

"It is Vardou, the dramatist," said Rawdon.

"It is an ingrate," said the empress passionately.

"You may be sure, madame, that Vardou is pacifying the mob, not inciting it," said Madame Le Breton. "I know him too well to believe him capable of such baseness." Long afterward Trajan learned that the intrepid author had saved the woman who distrusted him. It was his firmness that checked the mad cry to advance on the palace. Still the strain of uncertainty continued. The vague noises in the ante-chamber rose and fell; clamors broke out under the windows. No one knew what to expect. Trajan wondered why some friend did not warn the empress that precious time was wasting. The wan group with glasses in hand scanned the Place de la Concorde. There was yet a possibility of quelling anarchy. Even Trajan recoiled aghast at the spectacle. Not less than one hundred and fifty

point, until the flight of the empress was secured. She had wrapped herself in a plain water-proof and drawn a veil over her face. The route to be traversed runs along the Seine side of the palace, a distance of a third of a mile. At the iron doorway dividing the picture galleries from the Pavilion de Flore, the empress' quarters, the party were brought to a halt. Heavens—the strong doors are locked. The warden had disappeared days before. The miserable victim is caught in a trap. Trajan looked about for a weapon. There was none. Madame Le Breton cried out to wait, and hurried back along the passage. The empress sank exhausted on one of the red velvet banquettes used by the door-keeper. Trajan looked out on the river bank. The street was packed with people howling and gesticulating. As some one in the crowd caught sight of him, a fierce cry broke out:

"Down with Bonaparte—Vive la Republic!" In the brief glance Trajan caught sight of two sinister, lurid eyes transfixing him; he looked again. It was Ferré, the Communard, who had sworn to wreak vengeance on Bonaparte and his family. A pebble struck the glass as Trajan hastily withdrew from the deep embrasure. In a few minutes, which seemed an hour, Madame Le Breton returned, her eyes sparkling. The key was on the rack numbered and labeled, and she had no difficulty in snatching it unseen. The great doors swung open with a sound that seemed to encourage the forlorn hope. Through the magnificent galleries, hung with the master-pieces of Rubens, Van Dyke, Leonardo, Poussin, Claude, and the imperishable dynasties of art, the group fled, their steps sounding like the tramp of a regiment on the polished marquetry floors. The square of St. Germain L'Auxerrois was empty. A cab stood by the curb. Trajan, sent out to reconnoiter, signaled that the coast was clear. The veiled empress and Madame Le Breton passed swiftly over the tesselated pavement and entered the cab. As she sank back she

raised her veil an instant to catch a last glimpse of the Louvre. As her eye rested on the fatal colonnade, where Catherine de Medici and the king had stood on the night of St. Bartholomew, a little ragamuffin, seated on the edge of the stone support of the golden railing, started up shouting :

"Ah, ha—there is Madame Bonaparte!" A group of artisans, lounging at the corner, vaguely caught the cry and came forward. Count de Lesseps, with admirable presence of mind, caught the urchin, whirled him round and sent him sprawling in the roadway, saying furiously :

"That 'll teach you to hurrah for the Bonapartes, when the Republic is proclaimed." The group on the sidewalk approved this laudable sentiment.

Count de Lesseps got inside with the empress. The cab drove off at a rapid pace. Rawdon bidding Trajan hasten, hurried to the narrow street behind the church where another cab was waiting, got in, and the driver apparently knowing what to do drove off in the direction taken by the first cab. As they turned into the Rue Faubourg St. Honoré, the cab was just ahead of them. The carriage with the empress had just turned into the narrow Rue de l' Arbre Sec when Trajan, glancing back uneasily, caught a glimpse of Ferré running toward them from the river side, accompanied by a shouting group, whom he was urging onward. At regular distances signals were exchanged with men standing at street corners. Rawdon explained that this was to apprise the coachmen that the coast was clear. The driver of the empress was the famous Gambier, the deputy master of the Imperial horse, who had been with Napoleon in exile in London in 1847.

"The man driving our cab," he added, "is a viscount and colonel in the emperor's guard—both are armed to the teeth and the box bristles with revolvers." Happily the misery of exile was not to be embittered by bloodshed. The fugitives arrived safely at the house of an American in the quietest quarter of the Champs Élysées, a mile or more from

the Tuileries, where the exhausted empress was carried in and secluded. She fell into a lethargic sleep—a sleep that the physicians forbade to be disturbed for ten hours, if it could be made to last so long. But the pre-arranged plan did not admit of such delay, nor was the poor woman given much choice.

Count Kératry, who had been installed head of the police at noon, who was not ignorant of the efforts in behalf of his former sovereign, had sent Lesseps word that the safety of the empress could only be secured by instant flight from the city—even if she had to be carried in a chest —that the project of secreting her in the convent would be madness. A council was at once held. Trajan, Rawdon, and Lesseps were despatched to the northern station to post a force of detectives in the waiting-room and keep the coast clear for the evening train. A little before eight o'clock, Trajan, waiting at the door, recognized Gambier as the cab rolled up. The empress, veiled in an ordinary traveling costume, came forward with Madame Le Breton.

She took Trajan's arm, entered the waiting-room, and talked quietly with her companion while Rawdon bought the tickets for Maubeuge. When the train drew out of the station, beside the foreign legion guarding the exile there were a score of devoted adherents scattered through the various compartments, well armed and ready in the event of disaster. But the empress had no knowledge of it. Strangers were entrusted with the immediate care of the fugitive, lest suspicion should be aroused by the presence of any of the well-known friends of the empire. On Wednesday, the 7th, after a detour in Belgium to ward off suspicion, the party reached Deuville on the Norman coast, fearing to venture on any of the regular lines across the channel. At the little town, the escort locked in vain for a bark to carry the remnants of Cæsar to safety. By the merest chance an English nobleman had his yacht in port awaiting the arrival of his wife from Italy. When the situation had been

cautiously confided to him he made every preparation for receiving the hunted relic of a great reign. On the evening of the 7th, Trajan took his leave of the empress. She grasped his hand with grateful fervor and in a broken tone said :

"Monsieur, you have kept your pledge ; if those whose fortune and indulgence in our days of power we are held to blame for had been half as true—your Republic would not even have the short term to which it is destined—but this sounds ungrateful"—and she smiled sadly—"I can only give you the thanks of an exile. If happier times should ever come—remember that they will be made still happier by the presence of one who has been the friend of the betrayed and abandoned. God bless you—adieu !"

Trajan bent over the hand that held his own, and touched his lips to it in painful emotion. A moment later she was gone. He stood on the sandy beach, watching the yacht as she steamed out into the darkness and the rising waves. As befitted such an event, the wind rose in fury, the little vessel was whipped and tossed, and many a time the wretched fugitives fell on their knees, believing that the hand of God, like the hate of men, had determined on their extinction. Trajan learned of the terrors of the passage afterward through a note written him by order of the empress in London, where with the poor little prince, her son, she waited many a weary day in anguish a recall to her regent's duties in the cruel capital she loved so well. After a night of tempest the refugees landed at Ryde, on the Isle of Wight, not far from that stately villa of her royal cousin Victoria—Osborne, where in other days she had come as the guest of England. A few hours later her alarm and anguish were forgotten in the arms of her son at the little town of Hastings—where eight hundred years before another French prince had landed, who changed the course of British history and the destiny of a people.

Trajan stood on the beach in the edge of the storm that settled on the sea, and watched the gleaming light of the little vessel, until darkness, thick, impenetrable, sinister, fell like a curtain and shut out all but the spectral outlines of the tumbling sea. He was penetrated by an indefinable sadness. Certainly with his convictions, his inexpugnable faith in the rights of man and the sanctity of the social contract, he could not regret the end of the December crime, nor the punishment of the *coup d'état* criminals. He went to his room in the pretty hostel, and it was long after midnight when he sealed the letter to Somebody, wherefrom I have taken the details recorded in the foregoing chapters.

On certain other things said in that voluminous narrative I do not think it needful to dwell. Even warriors in love fall into the fond follies that most of us look back upon with a blush and a sigh. Trajan was no wiser nor more contained than the rest of us. At that particular epoch, he was indeed in such a state of exaltation that his dithyrambics would, in the sober realities of the present, sound bumptious and perhaps ridiculous. It is the business of the biographer to veil his hero's humanities, when they take on the hue and tenor of the commonplace or the paradoxical. A concluding passage in the letter will enable us to understand his mental atmosphere however.

"You may imagine," he wrote, "the whirl in which these strange scenes have left me. I can not realize that I have been for a month the near companion, almost confidant, of the family I have been accustomed to associate with all that is criminal, self-seeking and debasing. I look back upon the tragic episodes, with the same feeling that one has in rising from a play of Shakespeare's in the action of which he has for a few hours identified himself. I'm ashamed to say that there were moments when, had the decision rested with me, I should have confirmed Bonaparte on the throne that he snatched by fraud and lost by blunders that would be grotesque if they were not humiliation and ruin to a generous

and chivalrous people. When I recall the unfortunate empress, the beauty that conquered Europe, faded, the wit that delighted Mérimée, the pundit of the press, a tuneless echo of a remembered melody, I can find it in my heart to take a vow as the troubadours and knights of old, to make her famous by my pen and glorious by my sword. She has learned a bitter lesson, poor woman. What more pathetic than the humiliating necessity of calling on foreigners and political foes to save her from the ruin in which the treachery, incapacity, and greed of courtiers had involved her.

"To the last she displayed more spirit and courage than the whole body of her ministers. It was she who proposed quitting Paris, retiring to the Loire, and summoning all France to repel the Germans, indifferent to the form of government that should emerge from the certain success following such a heroic measure. It was to put this in execution that she asked old Palikao to hold back the news from Sédan for twenty-four hours. He kissed her hand and pledged his honor to do it; just before midnight, on the 3d, word came that he had told the story to the Corps Legislatif.

"She turned pale, took a signet from her finger, and sent it by a page to the recreant minister. De Palikao never came near her afterward. It is all over now, and somehow I feel as if every thing were come to an end for me. I have no heart to go on, and this, too, at the moment when the dream of years is realizing itself, without crime, mob law, or any of the repulsive violence that usually marks change, however wholesome."

Somebody, I have no doubt, found other parts of this epistle a good deal more interesting than those I have set forth, for while this page is clear, the others are dim and faded in big blotches, as though steeped in some chemical with an ingredient of salt in the solution!

The next night Trajan was installed in the Rue Dragon. He tried to resume his long-neglected painting, but the hand that is not the instrument of the mind finds no

alembic dyes on the pallet. He gave up the attempt in disgust and fell to reading. Even this resource failed him. His mind wandered riotously. A pair of blue eyes were constantly on the page, tantalizing and distracting him. The atmosphere of the city, too, was not calculated to inspire the repose needed for artistic effort. His friend Gambetta was now minister. The new government was at work like Titans to stay the avalanche let loose by the falling away of the imperial props. It was fully a week after his return when a note reached Trajan in Gambetta's gnarled jerky hand. He was too busy to be glad that his comrade had escaped the dangers of the campaign, and had only time to tell him to repair at once to the cabinet of Jules Favre, the foreign minister, who had need of such services as Trajan alone could render. He, Gambetta, had talked to his colleague of the young man, and he might expect a "most sympathetic welcome."

At the ostentatious palace of the quai D'Orsaï he was forced to wait the entire forenoon before he could reach the minister.

Jules Favre, long the leader of the French bar, who could, by the incomparable music of his voice and the florid play of his fancy, move judges and juries to tears and anger, sat in the gorgeous bureau of De Morny and his princely predecessors, the simple avocat, immersed in the heart-breaking work put upon him by his countrymen. His shock of iron-gray hair almost touched the mass of papers he was annotating, as Trajan, after five hours' waiting, was shown into the room. He pushed back his chair as Trajan came quite up to him, and pointed to a seat. Then turning to his secretaries, commanded them to return in ten minutes. When the two were alone, he began to talk, rather as if resuming a subject than introducing one:

"You were at the Prussian headquarters two days; you saw the king when he received Bonaparte's surrender; you heard the talk of the camp and the courtiers; can you give

us an idea of the Prussian purpose? Narrate in the minutest detail every thing you saw there. Spare nothing, for we may seize from the most inconsequent trifle something that will give us a hint for the work we have to do."

Trajan began at the very beginning and set forth every thing he had seen and heard. The secretaries appearing before he was half done, Favre impatiently dismissed them with an order to wait till he rang. He listened with profound attention, breaking in frequently with exclamations as the narration went on.

"And so you saved Bonaparte's life?" he said, coming to the young man, and laying his hand on his shoulder impetuously. "*Grand Dieu! Grand Dieu!* what a complicated game we are in! Do you realize, cold-blooded young Saxon, that you, that you alone, have made the Republic possible? Do you realize that Bonaparte killed, or even captured in fight, would have touched the sympathies of our emotional French natures, and that the country would have joined as a man to console his widow and affirm his dynasty? It was only through the proof of his selfishness and ignoble nature at Sédan that France could be convinced of his foul, self-seeking and incorrigible baseness. I salute you, young man—I embrace you," and to Trajan's confusion, the big-bearded man lifted him from the chair and kissed both cheeks. "Ah, mon Dieu! the Bonaparte little dreamed when he flattered you that night at the mill, surrounded by the Prussians, that you were the instrument of Providence to enable France to rouse from her stupor.

"But the Republic has more work for you, and I exact your inviolable secrecy in all that I confide to you. Not even Gambetta, not one of the club, not even your sweetheart," and the big man smiled kindly, "must know of what you are about to do. Here it is in brief. I believe that peace can be made with the Prussians now that Bonaparte is gone. It was against him they professed to make war. Now I am going to ask an immense service of you—one, in fact, that

imperils your life and mine. You must go to the king's quarters. You must get speech with Bismarck; you must lay before him the points of a memorandum, which I shall read to you, but which I dare not allow out of my possession. If it were known to my colleagues or suspected in Paris, I should be butchered as a Prussian sympathizer.

"If you were suspected to even know of such a thing, the Garde Mobile would burn you alive. I leave all the details of the business to you. Such resources as you displayed at Metz and Sédan will conquer every thing. I promise you no reward. I would not thus insult you; but there must come a time when the country will be made to know your heroism and devotion. Come to me again this evening, and I will have the plan of action prepared." He rang a bell. A lackey entered. "Send Monsieur Carnot to me," and, to Trajan's ungovernable surprise, that devoted pillar of imperialism came forward from the adjoining cabinet, as if it were his old patron, Duke Grammont, the imperial minister, instead of the abhorred Republican that ruled the place.

"Monsieur Carnot, you will be good enough to see that Monsieur Gray is admitted to me at all times, no matter what may intervene. He is an attaché of the *conseil du ministére.*" Jules bowed, without a sign of surprise or discomposure, and led Trajan with serene gravity to the apartment occupied by the body the minister had named. He explained, when they were alone, that as an attaché of the late minister, Grammont, Favre had begged him to remain in place, and as his allegiance was to France before the dynasty, he had promptly accepted the post. He essayed to learn the functions his quondam comrade was to fill, but Trajan dryly turned the conversation to other matters, and speedily brought the interview to a close. Three days later, master of Favre's purpose, he set out for the Prussian headquarters, the army being on its way to Paris, but where was not exactly known.

CHAPTER XXVII.

A TANGLED WEB.

TIME did not bring content to Elliot. Though the subject of Trajan's flight was never mentioned at Crécy, he felt every day more keenly the truth—that "To be wroth with one we love doth work like madness in the brain." He had tried vainly to make himself believe that the cruel words he had flung at his friend were the expression of such anger as Paul tacitly justifies in his lustier days. The scene in the arbor tormented him.

He strove in vain to justify himself to himself—a tribunal that pronounces the surest verdicts, but is not always, unhappily, equal to enforcing them. To the calm judgment of this court he valorously plead the most sophistical grounds of extenuation. To have parleyed or equivocated, in the face of Trajan's sweeping charge, would have been to admit a doubt of the sincerity of his own devotion, at the very moment when the proof of that devotiou could alone win its object.

Had he been sure of Theo's love, nay, had he been sure of his own, he would have heard the doubt cast upon her integrity with derisive good-humor. In this plea to the court, he had no opposing attorney to puncture the weak point in this chain of reasoning, marred by numerous lost links, as we know, and he didn't. He lost sight of the basis of all his monologuing—that it was to convince himself and not others that he had borrowed the language of outraged love. It was himself who doubted the reality of the impulse that had, in spite of himself, impelled him to offer Theo a heart that was not his to give. Had he been sure of his feeling for the bewildering coquette who ruled his mind, not his heart, he would have laughed at Trajan's bizarre and theatrical *entrée en scene.* He would have bur-

lesqued the two, Kate and Trajan, as they stood at the door of the arbor—Satyrs mocking the Loves.

He would have listened to Trajan's overwrought warning, if not as the debilitation of a sick man, at most as the officious interference of a misguided friendship. While he might lament the disaster that had soured his friend, in the loss of his sweetheart, he would have regarded his own better fortune as a tribute to his own superior love-making—for the lover is selfish as the sea, that not only feeds upon all the springs of the earth, but swirls in the evaporation of the system that maintains it. It would have stimulated his dormant complacency to see that Theo, with a fine fellow like Trajan at her feet, had waited to find her fate in him. Victory is the breath of our life, and it is rather sweeter when won from those who wear the garland of our own admiration. What flattery so subtle as the admission that we have unhorsed a valiant friend in the lists of love? that the rose on the lip and the light in the eye have been given us as the guerdon of our prowess?

Here was the rub. Elliot could not determine whether he was the victor, nor whether, being victor, he felt happier in holding the token. His swift infatuation had lost none of its tantalizing force. He was still happy in the flash of her amber eye; he forgot every thing in the sparkling sallies of her wit. His passion was fed by just enough of uncertainty to make the pursuit a sensation. Much as he had seen of Theo—and they rode together daily—she was still a profound mystery to him. She was the frankest and most outspoken woman he had ever met, but he thought over all her sayings, and was puzzled to gain any thing really indicative of her nature from the sum. She was never reticent, but he felt that while she covered every topic, and covered it well, it was he who had contributed the intimacies, those little personal revelations that bind kindred natures. He had gone to her a hundred times, resolved to lead her into talking of herself and giving him

the glimpses that weld love into enduring assimilation. She never resisted these advances. She never remained silent, but somehow when he thought it all over afterward, he only knew that she had been keenly critical, gay and expansive upon things that the whole world might have heard. She never avoided talking of Trajan, lauding his noble nature, his manly impulses, but insensibly worked the topic around until she succeeded in making him monomaniacal and absurd.

In his reflective moments he contrasted this effusive reticence with Bella's. She, too, had the gift of talking a subject away from itself, and concealing by an apparent frankness the thought her interlocutor was bent upon uncovering. Her spirit was as keen as Theo's, but less placative. She had nothing of the coquetry of egoism in her arts. She resented the exclusion of woman from the domain of colloquial empire that home society concedes to men. She loved to shine at the dinner-table, not to gain personal devotion, but to uphold an equality of intellectual prowess with her neighbors. Bella could talk during an entire evening, and no dreg of scandal, ill-nature or mischief-making could be detected in the sparkling outflow. If she satirized the follies of her sex, it was subjectively, and no woman who heard her carried away the slightest rankling of the venom that often lingers after women's wit. She was like a physician whom long practice and mingling with all ranks has made a man of the world. She could talk with all grades of intelligence without once suggesting the impression to any of them that she was conscious of knowing more, or being better informed.

In this she was far cleverer than her rival, whose quick wit sometimes betrayed her into an insensible exhibition of conscious superiority. There was another difference. Bella's reticence was the result of breeding as well as study; she never, therefore, led her friends into that dangerous expansiveness that makes us feel like cutting our

tongues out, when, in the elation of sudden sympathy, we unburden things that we have no right to breathe. Bella never permitted such self-immolation on the altar of confidence. Theo, on the contrary, held every human being by a chain of self-forged serfdom. The victim of her wiles, vaguely impressed with the belief that the artful diplomate had opened the secrets of her cabinet, blurted out things long buried from the censorious eyes of the world. Both Bella and Theo were alike in avoiding the obtrusive reticence which incites the most indifferent. They never came into a group, looking wise and smiling significantly when people and events were mentioned, as though challenging some one to give them provocation to reveal the unrevealable. It was the possession of these curious qualities by the two women which led Elliot into the Iliad of woes I am now describing. Had Bella been the ordinary sort of woman, Elliot would have been her accepted lover from the first, Theo never could have made her sinister diversion, and half the incidents of this history would have been a dreamer's dream.

With the continued startling news from the army, the Grovels began to discuss flight. The head of the family had interests that could be attended to only in Paris. At that time there was no thought of the total collapse of the French armies. The crisis was not without its significance to Theo. Her revenues would now come to an end, as Americans would hardly come to Paris to get the fashions, and she must come to a resolution as to her future. The absence of Jules tormented her. She had set her heart on his marrying Bella, quite unconcerned as to the entanglement of the prince, which she felt confident she could cut when the time came. She would have preferred remaining at Crécy some time longer, and hinted as much to Mrs. Arden one day when the Grovels' preparations for departure were nearly ended.

But Mrs. Arden, without having discussed the matter,

knew that Theo was not liked by her daughter or Bella. For herself, she would not have objected to the young lady's presence; indeed, she would have been rather glad, for she was fond of visitors, and thought Theo. a most agreeable guest. To Theo's careless expression of dislike to returning to the turmoil of the city, distracted as it was by war and revolution, she answered that her family, too, would be obliged to make a move, as every thing was unsettled, and they must be where Elliot could attend their interests in America. The discomfited schemer said no more, but, riding out that evening, she asked Elliot if the inn at Crécy was habitable for a lady! She added that it might be necessary for her to take rooms there with her kinswoman La Baronne, who had received word from Meaux that the Prussians would be there within a few days.

"But why not come to us? My mother will be enchanted to receive you," cried the young man delightedly.

"That would be charming," she replied quietly, and dropped the subject. That night Elliot hastened to his mother's room to inform her of Theo's embarrassment, and suggested that she should be invited to stay at Les Charmettes. Edith, who was present and came behind her brother, stood with her arms around his neck, brushing her cheek against the shadowy down that gave promise of future hirsute glory, looked up suddenly, and catching her mother's eye, shook her head, unseen by the victim of her caressing duplicity.

"My dear, we can't very well receive Miss Carnot now; as you said yesterday, there's no telling how soon we may have to quit the château. Just now none of us feel equal to entertaining strangers."

"But she might come and stay while we stay. I see no inconvenience in that."

"I'd rather you wouldn't ask it, Elliot," said Mrs. Arden doubtingly. "You say I'm the tyrant of the household, indulge me in this rare exhibition of inhospitality."

"But really, Madame Nero, there is a time when tyrannicide is a sacred duty. I will swear Edith and Bella into a conspiracy to depose you, if you persist in driving the homeless from your door."

"Very well, if you can gain those two powers I will not provoke insurrection."

"What do you say, Edy—what your brother wants you want; isn't it so? Faithful alone among the faithless, speak, and shame the domestic tyrant."

Edith, redoubling her caresses, planted herself on the victim's knee, and from this vantage-ground said:

"Do you remember the story you told me once illustrating the charm of French manners?"

"I can't say that I recall any particular lesson from among the innumerable maxims I have made it a parental duty to expound to you."

"You once said that the incident of the old Duke de la Rochefoucauld, descending the stairs from a grand reception and meeting a boyish young noble bounding up, should be framed in gold and hung in every household where there are young people. The old duke had descended four stairs, the lad, glittering in orders and court braveries, reached the step beneath. Both stopped. The duke, a model of last century grace and politeness, mindful of all the little elegancies that Rénan laments so beautifully, backed against the wall. The boy backed against the banister, both bowing low. 'Pass,' said the duke. 'Never,' said the lad. 'I beg of you,' cried the duke. Then, as you said in your droll way, the sticklers might have been there to all time, like Molière in the presence of Louis XIV. on the wall at Versailles, if the gallant youth had not been inspired. You remember what he said?"

"What did he say, traitress?"

"Bowing until his head was on a level with the old duke's feet, he cried gallantly, 'It is the duty of youth to obey,' and passed up."

"And this fable teaches—"

"That it is the duty of this youth to obey his mamma, who never commands any thing she hasn't good reasons for," and the artful rogue fell to kissing the astonished youth, fairly smothering his protests.

"I never gave you credit for such consummate duplicity," he at last rescued himself to say, as he studied the demure face with fretful surprise. He had never seen the maiden fortified by such motives. The very thought of Theo under the roof from which she had driven Trajan was enough to inspire her to all the arts of feminine resistance, of which poor Elliot little dreamed. He realized in a hazy sort of way the cause of the sudden inhospitality of his mother and sister and dropped the point. He never alluded to the subject to Theo, and she was wise enough to make no reference to a further sojourn in the place. It was arranged by the kind-hearted Mrs. Grovel that La Baronne should share her house in Paris until the uncertainties of the campaign were over, and presently, greatly to Edith's relief, the Duclos château was closed and the major-domo of the owner reinstalled. The prince took leave of Les Charmettes in state.

He was to go to Paris to place himself at the command of the government, for, as he explained, the legitimate monarch would very soon reign in the palace of his ancestors. He trusted to see his new friends in Paris, and hinted that delay would suit him very well in the alliance he had proposed. Bella bade her suitor adieu with good feeling, but not a sign of embarrassment or emotion. Theo, who was present, owned that her conduct was "perfect," that a born princess could not have carried out her *rôle* more charmingly. And the prince seemed very well pleased to hear all this. He was proud to think that in any event the world could not accuse him of contemplating a vulgar *mésalliance*.

Theo's departure gave secret but none the less deep joy to three members of the household at Les Charmettes. Kate sinfully ejaculated a devout thanksgiving that Jezebel had

gone before doing more mischief, as she stood at the upper window where Edith, equally delighted, but less emphatic, ran up to confide her satisfaction.

"But, Kate dear, if my poor Elliot should persist and marry—oh, what should we do? I could never even see her without a nervous spasm. She affects me like—like—I don't know what," she added, repenting the harsh word that came to her tongue.

"Why don't you out with it and say what ye mean. It's just a snake and nothing else," her wrath throwing Kate's vowels into their Scotch broadness. "Ye need have na fear o' th' lad goin' that length. Tho' there's no freck like a lad's folly when a hussy o' th' like o' that's at his chin to wheedle th' teeth out of his head. But I've a way of loos'nin' Jezebel's grip, and ye need give yersel' no fear. I've ta'n the measure o' that un," she added with a grim smile, "and I'll lay my head to a wraith's kirtle that I beat her where she counts on shearing the thickest wool."

"Kate, you're a dreadful creature. What do you mean by such uncanny hints and vows? I declare I'm afraid of you," and womanlike, to prove it, she wound her arms around the spinster's neck and hugged her with vehemence.

"Ye're a puir witless bairn yersel'," was the reward, given with placid resignation by the wicked plotter, "or ye'd never let the boy fall intil her claws. But ye may mend all now by doin' as I tell ye and mindin' what I say."

"I'm your slave, your Friday, your lamp—rub me and all you dream shall come to pass."

"It isn't dreams I want, it's facts, and you must get them and ask me no questions. Here's what ye'll have to do. Bring me th' lists o' stocks, funds and all sorts of investments that yer faether left yer brither's fortune in. Get at th' same time a statement of Bella's. Get me the whole with the addresses and th' like, and never open ye'r mouth til onybody. Now ask me no questions," she added, fondling the blonde head, as the large eyes presaged the volley of

questions these extraordinary interrogatories suggested. "Give me all these facts within three days, and I'll play the bagpipes at Jezebel's marriage and dance, into the bargain," with which confusing sentiment she brought the cabal to a close.

On the very afternoon of Theo's departure who should come walking in, bringing a shock of electric joy, but the warrior Philip. He had been taken to Heidelberg, and in his quality of American, had been treated with lenity. General Kamecke, the real leader of the army, supposed to be commanded by prince Fritz, had been appealed to by letter. He knew Philip and permission had been given him to retire as a non-combatant, with a hint that further participation on the French side would subject him to disagreeable consequences. He considered himself on parole and would so write to his friend Vinoy. His wound had not been severe—the blow of a clubbed musket on the shoulder and neck. He had returned through Belgium and found no difficulty in getting to Crécy. He would not dare remain there himself, for the Germans were within march of it that very day.

Elliot ridiculed all idea of danger, but it was agreed that if the place was likely to be long within the invading lines the family would be better off in England. Towards dark the cousins sauntered down to the village to read the war bulletins, for there were no longer any journals distributed from Paris. In the pretty town the frightened people had been in a fever for weeks. The first stunning blow, a month or six weeks before, found them with every thing prepared for a grand celebration of the passage of the Rhine and a decisive defeat of the king's armies in the Palatinate. The garlands, tarnished and withered, had been thrown aside and the little spasm over the founding of the Republic two weeks before had been celebrated in decorous acclamation—nobody imagining that a government born in such a tumult was to continue, and in the future avenge by years of peace, good order, and wisdom the humiliation through which alone it

had been made possible. It was the 15th of September, and the terrified populace stood mute before the curt phrase which announced the arrival of the Prussians before the Northern outposts of Paris. King William and the head-quarters were at Meaux, only ten miles distant. The Uhlans had been seen near Crécy early in the day and the *maire* had sent out a delegation to secure a peaceful occupation of the town. The shops were closed. All the residents with available means had quit the town, leaving the *maire* guardian of their property. Every body understood that the Prussians were cruel, rapacious, and revengeful in the occupation of the defenseless towns. But some one must stay, and the unfortunates having buried all portable values awaited the despoilers in speechless terror. As the advent of the invaders had been the subject of discussion at Les Charmettes, and it had been decided that their occupation of this obscure corner would be but temporary, it had been decided to remain. The young men were curious to see the famous conquerors of Sadowa and Sédan, and an hour later, a company was installed in Les Charmettes. Philip was in a fever of apprehension as he saw Elliot's anger sternly flaming in his eyes as the Prussians made themselves masters of the treasures of the château. He could have borne this, had the captain been content with mere pillage, but when in tipsy arrogance the German commanded the appearance of the ladies, Elliot could contain himself no longer, and stigmatizing the Herr Baron and captain of Uhlans as a coward and robber, the young man was promptly sent under guard to Meaux, to answer the serious offense of spy and insulter of Prussian majesty.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A MISSION TO THE KING.

BEFORE leaving Paris Trajan learned through the English journals that the German headquarters were at Reims on the 12th, but were to advance to Meaux in the wake of the army then pushing on through Châlons and Château Thierry, where the last feeble efforts of the Mobiles had not checked the advance an instant. Trajan arrived in Meaux, a town with which he was very familiar, as it is the center of the pretty country in which the *Beaux Arts* students are sent to study landscape. The city is thirty miles in an air line from Paris. He reached the town on the morning of the 12th, and though headquarters had not yet arrived, the king was expected at noon. He had picked his way through the Prussian videttes and, to prevent trouble in case of capture, had somewhat changed his appearance. His flowing hair was cropped short, as much for convenience and cleanliness as disguise, and he wore an English suit of loud checked stripes. It would have been difficult for any one but an acquaintance to recognize him. He was not sanguine of the success of the mission Favre had set such store on, which was nothing less than peace, purchased by an alliance with Prussia with the sole condition of territorial integrity for the Republic and any indemnity the conqueror saw fit to exact in money. He secured lodgings in a quiet street where he had lodged years before and waited patiently for the formidable business he had in hand—formidable, because he realized that in the event of failure or disaster, he was to be sacrificed by a prompt disavowal, as Favre had frankly told him. But his thoughts were far from his mission.

In a direct line, Somebody, from whom he had not heard for a month—was but eight miles from him, and there came

moments of maddening impulse to desert his duty and fly to her presence, if only for the rapturous instant of an embrace. The house next him was occupied by a provost corps of Saxons, who guarded such non-military prisoners as were detained for examination or transportation to German prisons. He knew the Saxons very well. He had lived among them in Dresden, and in foot tours in the Saxon Switzerland, as the beautiful region of the Saxon upper Elbe is called, he had made many warm friendships among that honest and friendly race. The lieutenant of the guard had been in the Polytechnic in Dresden, and after a bit Trajan found that they had many friends in common.

Some of them, he learned, had gone to America to escape the war, which was not entered upon enthusiastically at first by the proud little kingdom, which hates the Prussians with a hearty hatred. The honest lieutenant confided to his American friend that he, too, intended to quit the fatherland for America, where the family of his sweetheart had gone the year before and was settled in Milwaukee—about which he was eager to hear all that Trajan knew. His eyes sparkled at the description of the stately metropolis of Wisconsin, and nothing would satisfy him but copious potations of Strasbourg beer in the neighboring cabaret. Trajan was not at all unresponsive to the advances of the guileless lieutenant, as he reflected that he might prove of use to him in the emergencies that might arise. At five o'clock, as he was discussing poetry in the English tongue, which his friend besought him to employ, as he wanted to be ready to speak when he rejoined his "*Schatz in Amerika*" there was a great clatter in the main street leading to Bossuet's palace.

They set out to see what it meant. Rousing cheers filled the whole town. The king was driving down the street under the double rows of chestnuts to the palace. "*Hoch hoch's*" in every cadence accompanied the cortege as the royal traveling carriage, preceded and followed by a retinue as large as a regiment, whirled swiftly by. Neither Bismarck

nor Moltke formed part of the train. The latter had ridden forward by another route through the city and taken up his quarters in the commandant's house. Bismarck had driven straight to the residence of the Count de la Malte in the Rue Tronchon, not a stone's throw from Trajan's lodging.

As the chancellor would probably be fatigued, Trajan simply wrote a note outlining the purpose of his visit, and begging to know when it would be convenient for the count to admit him. To his no small surprise a messenger was with him in twenty minutes, and he was conducted to the statesman's presence. Bismarck was in undress—with the short frock of the trooper, and high military boots, but without arms.

Two secretaries were busy at a table piled with newspapers. Busch, the factotum, was reading aloud a leader from the London *Times* counseling the conquerors to forbearance and hinting England's interest in a cessation of the conflict. As Trajan entered the reading did not come to an end, but the secretaries went on impassively, apparently indifferent to the new comer. Bismarck, turning from the table where a bottle of champagne stood in a silver cooler and a glass of mixed beer and wine remained half empty, scrutinized the young man—then looked puzzled as if striving to recollect something which evaded him. Nodding to the reader to cease, he turned to Trajan and said curtly:

"You are from those people who think they govern France—the Republican chaps," he said with a half-curious, half-contemptuous interest. "When I saw you last you were from the gentleman at Sédan. Isn't it so?"

Trajan colored; he had hoped that the inscrutable potentate of the world's destinies would have forgotten his face. He was not, however, embarrassed. He replied deferentially, but firmly:

"Your excellency will remember that I then told you I came to you as a Republican, and merely carried you a message which the then sovereign of France dared not confide to any of his own subjects. I was also instructed to ask

your excellency if a Republican government might hope to make terms; in which event, as I understood, Bonaparte was willing to abdicate and withdraw. I now come to ask your excellency if, having achieved your purpose and driven Bonaparte out, you are willing to make peace and an alliance with the Republic. If you are so disposed, I am directed to send a verbal message to Paris by a French citizen and await Minister Favre, who will have the honor of laying the whole matter before you."

"Why such roundabout proceedings? Why send a—a—stranger like you on such business? Why no credentials? this is simply preposterous! How do I know you are not a spy?" asked the chancellor, shading his eye with his hand, as he set down the replenished glass which he had gulped at a draught.

"If your excellency will permit me, I will answer each question in order. This informal method of preliminary was adopted by Minister Favre because a suspicion in Paris that he even meditated treating would not only ruin him but involve the government. I was selected, because Gambetta, whom I know very well and have known for some years, recommended me as likely to be more easily disavowed than a Frenchman, who would of course stand in peril of his life, while as for me, I return to my own country when my studies are ended. Your excellency knows I am not a spy, because my passport shows I am American, and there would be little gained by spying an army that outnumbers its adversaries six to one, yes, ten to one. I can readily understand that your excellency, accustomed to see national affairs entrusted to those only who hold titles, finds it difficult to comprehend that a great people ruling themselves, make use of the first available instrument that comes to hand."

The big chancellor, having swallowed another bumper of beer and champagne, emitted a sort of satisfied grunt, as he said dryly:

"Ah,—your Republics never lack instruments—that I own, they only lack sense. Upon my soul, I avow I am puzzled by this new freak in diplomacy. I can give you no answer now. I will see you again in the morning; Doctor," he added, turning to the spectacled hedge-hog scratching away at the desk, "accompany this—gentleman—" The conversation had been carried on in French, Trajan not wishing to reveal his familiarity with German. "Accompany this gentleman to his lodging and let him lay all the matter he has in hand before you, that you may make a memorandum for the king."

Trajan was greatly perplexed by this maneuver. He had no idea of stating more to Busch than he had already outlined to the chancellor. The garrulous Saxon, however, relieved him of all embarrassment. He grew amazingly communicative by the time he reached the young man's apartment. Trajan, with dim notions of the feints and falsehoods of diplomacy, was at a loss to penetrate the purpose of all this garrulity. Busch adored Bismarck. His idolatry was the joke of the headquarters. Caricatures of the supple Bozzy were already circulated in the army. It was about this stage of the campaign that the famous feud between the princes and Bismarck arose.

The king's familiars, all of them princes or personages of higher rank, resented the prominence given Bismarck's name in the glories of Prussia. They began studiously to ignore him; they prevailed on the king to establish the same rule in diplomacy that existed in the army, namely, that the royal mind alone, or a delegated prince, regulated the diplomacy of the kingdom. Bismarck should be conceded the same relative rank as Von Moltke, Steinmetz, Von Blumenthal, Kamecke, Manteuffel and others, who though really commanding the armies, devising and ordering every detail, were known to the world simply as adjutants, chiefs of staff and the like. To Trajan's immeasurable astonishment, Busch made him the confidant of all this court

heartburning, declaring that his venerated chief, as he called Bismarck, was half resolved to throw up his anomalous post and retire to his estates, to teach these meddlesome interlopers that he and not the king or princes was the inspiring source of all Prussian greatness. The genial old gossip, who for some reason took Trajan for an English correspondent, hinted the benefit to the fatherland of making the situation known delicately in the English press, whence being copied back into the German organs of public opinion, the foolish old king would see that Bismarck could not be overshadowed like Von Moltke, who didn't care a *groschen* who got the credit, so that he was permitted to carry out his work unmolested.

The talk was a riddle to the diplomatic neophyte, and I am afraid the disingenuous devotee of Bismarck thought the young fellow uncommonly dull and unenterprising. In hints not half so tangible he was accustomed to inspiring rhapsodies volumes in length in the home and American journals. He left the young man after an hour and a half of this sprightly mystifying, and it was only two days later when the London journals reached headquarters that Trajan imagined he had the clue. It was stated there, in the well-known phraseology dictated by Bismarck, that "a man had arrived at Meaux from Paris, bearing a flag of truce.

"The chancellor's secretary was sent out to communicate with him, and found a thin, dark-haired young fellow standing in the court of the chancellor's house. From his talk it was learned that he was an Englishman." Trajan breathed freely at the last sentence. If the journal should reach Paris, the paragraph was too vague to excite suspicion, or if it did, to identify him with the truce-bearer. He spent the evening with his friend, the lieutenant of the provost, after Busch's departure, who announced to him that a dangerous French spy had been brought in from the outposts. He had been sent from Paris early in the campaign to assassinate Bismarck, and two or three times the German army detectives

had fallen upon his tracks. There had been four attempts to assassinate Bismarck since the campaign opened, and now he never stirred without a guard of detectives in military uniform.

Trajan was diverted, but not interested, by the gossip of the lieutenant. He was thinking of a noble mansion to the south of him a few miles, and wondering how it was faring with the kind friends he had left there, and what a little maiden was doing with a part of himself that he had left with her and never cared to get back. All the next morning he waited an intimation from Busch that the chancellor had come to a conclusion. Toward noon he sauntered into the promenade filled with loitering soldiers and townfolk. It was a day of perfect autumn weather. The purple sweeps of the Marne spread in roseate mirage to the dim canopy of smoke that defined the site of the German goal, Paris. The streets were full of the stirring life of the camp. A great blare of trumpets announced from time to time the arrival at the palace gates beyond of a prince or potentate coming to do homage to the aged conqueror, housed in the charming palace where Bishop Bossuet wrote those famous homilies that moved the well-beloved Louis from frivolity or wantonness.

Bismarck appeared, sitting his charger like the god of war, and loud were the *hoch hoch's* as he passed, absently gazing at the spectacle. Trajan's eyes casually fell upon a carriage driven slowly towards him. Beside the driver sat a soldier in Prussian uniform—dark blue and yellow facings, in this instance. The vehicle had a singularly familiar look. Yes, could he believe his eyes? There was Bernard, Mrs. Arden's coachman. In the over-mastering delight of the moment, he started up and in two minutes stood beside the carriage. Bernard stopped the horses, without waiting to be told. As he did so, Mrs. Arden, agitated and anxious, looked out where Trajan stood but did not recognize him, as she asked the coachman why he halted.

"Mrs. Arden, don't you know me?"

Her glance had not rested on him an instant, but so soon as he spoke a joyous smile of recognition and relief drove away the look of subdued anguish. She held out her hand with impulsive joy, mingled with thanksgiving, and said fervently:

"I never saw a human face with more delight than yours, Mr. Gray.—Trajan, we're in miserable distress. Elliot was arrested last night as a spy. He was lodged at Crécy, we were told by a dreadful officer who made Les Charmettes his headquarters, until this morning, when he marched away. We were not permitted to leave our rooms until the ruffian left. On going to the guard left in Crécy we learned that Elliot had been sent here—now can you help us? I know there's nothing you can't do—for I've heard of your adventures at Metz and Sédan."

Now, madame, or sir, as the case may be, if you are interested in the doings of the absurd Trajan, figure the scene to yourself! The carriage had drawn in to the outer edge of the grass plat that makes a quadruple roadway along the Boulevard Bossuet. The stickler for topographical exactness may stand on the very spot, the next time he or she is in Meaux visiting the good bishop's souvenirs, by halting at the round turn where the Rue Bossuet enters the boulevard, debouching from the cathedral and palace. Under the leafy recesses the carriage drew up, and while Mrs. Arden failed to recognize Trajan, I am ashamed to say that he was quite oblivious of her presence, for there was a little scream, ever so soft and startled; a quick gleam of passing gold from the back seat to the front, as "Somebody" flew to the window facing mamma and thrust out the most bewitching hand that ever was seen, though it trembled like a poor little bird. It was probably to stay its trembling that the staring young man, listening to the mother and devouring the daughter, retained it in his two tenacious fists, quite as a matter of course and unconscious

of the curious and admiring glances of the soldiers who had also caught sight of the flash of gold.

A second later Trajan was in the carriage, seated next to the golden-haired and listening the more intently—because of a divided mind—to the particulars of the mishaps at Les Charmettes. Elliot's conduct he comprehended perfectly. Generous, impetuous, ignorant of the absolute lawlessness and unaccountability of men and officers in war, he could understand how he had indulged in the folly of resenting the German's brutality. He did not believe that Mrs. Arden could do any thing with the headquarters people, without appealing to the American minister, who stood well with Bismarck, and was entrusted with the interests of German citizens in France during the war. The utmost to be hoped would be a safe conduct for the family to Paris, as it was manifest that Crécy was no longer a refuge, subject as it was to daily incursions of the sort that had caused the catastrophe.

"But come to my hotel and we will advise over the matter." So to the trim little inn the three went, the soldier remaining rigidly on duty—as he had been ordered to take orders concerning the ladies, only from superiors at headquarters. He showed Trajan his written authority—which said simply: "Pass the bearer through all posts of the Marne, until 20th September." Trajan took care to have the man well bestowed, himself stopping to drink *brüderschaft* in a big pot of beer, while the ladies were removing their wraps. Somehow the trouble seemed a small matter as it was retold to Trajan. He listened with such a dreamy air of serenity, that the tears which had glistened in Mrs. Arden's kind eyes dissolved insensibly. While, as for Edith, a stranger would have accused her of an indifference verging on inhumanity as to the fate of her brother.

When every thing had been told, Trajan said tranquilly, "It would be wrong to deceive you as to Elliot's peril, but it is not beyond remedy. I have a suspicion that the poor

fellow is in the next house to my lodgings, which has been, since the Germans came, the prison of the provost guard, where political culprits are detained, until sent to Germany."

He then related the conversation of the lieutenant, and Mrs. Arden agreed that the circumstances tallied with the event. "Now," continued Trajan, "we have but small choice of alternatives. I am to see Bismarck, I don't know what moment. I will lay the case before him and learn what he advises, for you know that a procedure once begun in a Prussian court or camp, no power, not even the king, can arrest it. I will meanwhile write out your narrative, which I am sorry to say is of little value without Philip as witness to attest it. I will write it out all the same, with a statement of my own vouching for Elliot's guiltlessness of the charge of spying. This done, we must trust in Providence." But he was not destined to act as Mrs. Arden's amanuensis. He had barely sat down to his work, in which he seemed to be helplessly dependent upon the services of Edith in divers silly details, when a messenger whom he recognized as Busch's, saluting with stiff precision said:

"Herr Doctor Busch wishes you to attend at the Count's Bureau at once."

"You must write out the facts, and if I can I will send for them, in case there seems to be time enough for you to have written them. What a misfortune that we didn't do that first—for papers have poor chance at headquarters in war, when the fever of battle makes even the most rigid officers indifferent to routine." Busch received the improvised diplomate at the door, whispering confidentially:

"The chief is in superb humor, he has just seen Favre's announcement to foreign courts of the attitude of the Republic, and he will incline to treat, but you must have no reserves."

All this was incomprehensible to Trajan, who had no idea that he was distrusted by Bismarck, who had been unable to

believe such an envoy real. But as he afterward learned, Favre, not less *rusé* than his antagonist, had taken precaution soon after Trajan's departure to apprise Bismarck through the American minister that the man arriving at Meaux on the 15th might be trusted. It was that message that gained the envoy his second interview, and a markedly more considerate treatment. Bismarck, who seemed fond of costumes as a subaltern in a garrison town, was resplendent in the white uniform of the cuirassiers. He had substituted cigars for champagne, and a mass of volumes whose place was marked by gaps in the Count de la Malte's shelves, indicated that war and statecraft did not wholly occupy that colossal mind. He held in his hand as Trajan neared him, a thick volume, whose title, conspicuous on the back, struck the visitor with surprise : "*Daily watchwords and texts of the Moravian Brethren*," while open on the table, with a penknife as a mark lay, "*Daily Refreshment, for Believing Christians.*" The incident struck the young man with a thrill of loathing that he feared would appear in his face.

"This arch hypocrite," as he wrote afterward, "who uses truth as another uses falsehood, whose youth had been one prolonged, brutal debauch, whose political primacy had been won by the denial of every right of the people, whose policy was honey-combed with such craft as the first Bonaparte himself would have shrunk from ; this minister who had never kept an oath, this diplomate who had never kept faith ; this man who had never shrunk from treachery public or private, sat calmly before him, with works of religion spread out to make the credulous believe that there was some groundwork of morality in his cynical depravity."

These reflections could, of course, only occur to a wild young visionary like Trajan, fascinated by the old-fashioned theories that rule men and women—but they were, I fear, written on his face distinctly, for the chancellor suddenly catching the young man's eye, actually changed color—if a

front of bronze can change color, and said with an imperative ratchety growl :

"You may say to Favre that the king authorizes me to receive his propositions. A flag of truce goes in at midnight, to-morrow ; you can send your messenger with the party. A safe conduct will be supplied you." Saying this he turned to mark the interview at an end, and resumed the religious works cast aside for the moment, as if to reprove the skeptic for doubting the sincerity of his occupation. But for Trajan, there was another clause in the protocol, that to him far outweighed the Republic, I'm forced to own, for I should like to make the young man appear consistent, a sort of ideal Brutus, willing, nay anxious, to immolate his affections and other objects to the cause of universal amelioration, embodied in the beatitudes of his non-militant socialism. His voice trembled a little as he asked his excellency's permission to call his attention to a very grave complication in the rights of neutrals.

"What—*Pottstousand*, you give yourself the airs of an accredited ambassador—*Donnerwetter*, but this is as good as a play of Lessing. *Ach—ach*," and the big warrior, ignoring the *rôle* of devotee he had been posing in, burst into a shout of not wholly hilarious laughter—pausing capriciously as you have seen a mastiff baying at a tantalizing enemy and breaking into suppressed growl and whine—he said with mock ceremony : "*Eh bien—monsieur l'ambassadeur*—give yourself the trouble to acquaint us of the *fonds* of your inclination, and believe in our benevolent disposition to comply with your demand," and he leaned back in the large arm-chair choking with his own facetiousness. But as Trajan modestly and succinctly narrated the outrage at Les Charmettes and wound up by a respectful and eloquent plea to the chancellor to remember that the victims were the countrymen of the minister, who at the expense of much obloquy and the risk of a good deal more than mere discomfort, was protecting oppressed Germans in

Paris, the early scorn and malevolent humor disappeared from the strong and inspiring face.

"This is all true?" he asked, rising and walking the floor in very real perturbation.

"Yes, your excellency, if you will deign to send for the mother and sister of the young man they will repeat it to you."

"But they were not present, you tell me, at the encounter?"

"No, your excellency."

"Then to see them will be but wasting time. Where is the cousin, the young man? If you can produce him the affair may be adjusted—otherwise the king himself can not stop the proceedings."

"I'm afraid the young man has fled to Paris"—Trajan had not dared relate Philip's exploit.

"Then I give you no assurance. I will have the papers of accusation examined and apprise you of the result. Meanwhile, I must say to you that the case is serious. Several of the same sort have arisen since we entered Lorraine. People pretending to be English, but really French subjects, have maltreated and insulted our officers, and a month ago very stringent orders were issued that all such cases should be referred to a special tribunal—composed of military advocates, and with powers of life and death. If your friend can bring no ocular witnesses, the court is bound to take the accuser's statement and sentence accordingly."

He turned his back, and understanding the dismissal, Trajan withdrew, groaning: "Oh, Philip, Philip, what madness impelled you to deprive us of the only means of rescuing the victim?" The papers were completed when he re-entered the room at the inn, and, though not hoping much from them, they were despatched to Busch, with a prayer to lay them before the chancellor at the first favorable opportunity. As may be imagined, the mother and

sister were not inspirited by the tale Trajan had to tell, though he softened and colored it as much as he dared.

"But did he give us permission to see Elliot?" asked the mother anxiously as the story came to an end. Trajan started guiltily. He had entirely forgotten that. He would run back and make the request. But when he got to the door access was denied him. The count, he was informed, was occupied in affairs of state, and had given orders to admit no one. Reproaching himself bitterly for his shameful forgetfulness, he hastened to his friend the lieutenant of the provost. That cordial Saxon's eyes lighted with pleasure. He instantly proposed chess and beer. Though burning with impatience, Trajan saw no other way of getting at what he wanted. He was strong at chess and had discomfited the Saxon in several previous encounters, but, absorbed in his project, he was hardly over the first gambit, his knight wandering helplessly among pawns and bishops, when with a shout of exultation the delighted lieutenant routed him with pawn and bishop, only less ignominiously than by the "fool's mate." This put him in beaming humor, and he confided to his vanquished friend that he had been playing with the spy.

"The spy?" echoed Trajan innocently. "What spy?"

"Why, the fellow that was brought in last night. He says he's an American, by the way. Perhaps you may know him. His name is Arden."

"Mate," said Trajan, closing in on the king with a pawn, and uncovering queen and knight bearing on the king.

"*Ach, blitzen!* how sly you are! Another game," he pleaded, as Trajan arose; "that's a good fellow, just one." Trajan, protesting that he must be away at once, sat down to the rubber, and after just enough contest to make the victory worth while, he rose as the enraptured Saxon cried, "Mate!" Hurrying back to the Rue Tronchon, Trajan scribbled a line to Busch begging him for a moment's speech. The Herr doctor, beaming in the effulgence of a

recent ray of the chancellor's sunshine, came to the young man, confiding to him that there was no angel in the heavenly hierarchy so good, so great, so perfect, "so *wunderbar* and *prachtvoll*" as the dear, the adored chief. When Trajan had succeeded in arousing him to actual things, he appealed to his kind heart to aid a wretched mother and sister to get speech of the son and brother detained at the provost guard. The sentimental doctor was visibly moved, as much by the delicate flattery in which Trajan had managed to insinuate his potency, as by the pathetic flight of the wretched family.

"*Ach Gott, Ach Gott, das ist aber Schadlich—es ist*—but I will see—I will see if it can be managed. The chief doesn't like to meddle in Moltke's matters, but as this is more civil than military I will do what I can—wait!" He shambled into the count's apartment, rubbing his spectacles, on which there was a suspicious moisture visible. Five minutes passed; a half hour—Trajan's heart swelled with sickening suspense. The guard was changed as he sat distractedly on the stone bench; couriers passed in and out; great personages, whose appearance brought the whole detail to alignment and salute, came, entered and disappeared. The clock of the cathedral was booming five from its brazen but melodiously reverberating tongue, as the Herr doctor, his hedge-hog but kindly face beaming with delight, appeared waving a paper in triumph.

"There, isn't our glorious chief an archangel of mercy as well as wisdom? Give that to the *arme mütterchen und schwesterchen*—odious language—the French—that has no equivalent for those two *gemuthlich* and *leiblich* words. Take that and rejoice their *traurige herzen*, stolid Englishman that you are, who can not comprehend our *machtvoll* chief, nor even look grateful for such God-like condescension," and he pushed Trajan away with good-humored impatience. "*Dummer kopf*, I have a great mind to carry the message myself; you take it so coolly—as though the

chancellor's sign manual were such an every day affair. "I——"

But Trajan, aghast at the thought of the good doctor's appearance before the bewildered ladies, fled like a shot, the doctor's grunts of laughter sounding after him. When he was safe from observation he opened the paper and found that it was a permit for the *Frau* and *Fräulein* Arden to see the prisoner Arden in the presence of a provost guard for a half hour, and signed "Bismarck, Chancellor."

Discouraged by Trajan's long absence and dreading some new calamity, Mrs. Arden was stretched dejectedly on the stiff sofa, while Edith with swollen eyes sat beside her caressing and comforting her. Trajan's face was like a burst of sunshine when a curtained window is thrown open. It brought an almost ludicrous revival to the anxious group. Mrs. Arden was so nimble in resuming wrap and bonnet that when Edith (who had by some mischance lost her hand in Trajan's and found herself too trembling to withdraw it from his lips) looked up, there was nothing to be done in the way of filial duty.

Trajan was to show them the entrance, but was not himself to appear. Furthermore he charged them, as they hoped for Elliot's liberation, not to breathe a syllable of his presence in Meaux, because every word would be heard by the lieutenant. Edith was to mark with minute attention the exact location of Elliot's apartment and every thing that would help guide an outsider in case a rescue were the only means of relieving the prisoner. Thus instructed the two ladies sallied out buoyantly, and Trajan showing them the doorway marked by a sentinel, sauntered across the street to keep an eye on the expedition. He saw the ladies stop timidly and speak to the sentinel, who called to the corporal, who, shown the paper, touched his cap deferentially and the ladies disappeared. Mrs. Arden would have been shocked, I'm sure, if she had known the thoughts that were passing in Trajan's mind during that memorable half hour.

She sat with Elliot's hand in hers, while Edith by fits and starts wandered from corner to corner, alternately fondling the prisoner and chattering with the admiring lieutenant, who did his disagreeable duty with all the delicacy of a young fellow dazzled by such innocence and beauty, and reminded by it of his blue-eyed Wilhelmina, among strangers by the great waters of the *schöne* inland *meer* that Trajan had so picturesquely described. Elliot supposed Philip to be with his mother and sister, and they did not undeceive him. When the time came for parting, Elliot whispered in English to Edith that she had made a conquest of the guard and might prevail upon that sentimental youth to wink at his escape. The lieutenant's eyes met Edith's as she looked up blushing. She was sure that he had not only heard the playful speech, but understood it. She was not left in doubt on the point, for as they came out into the office he said with respectful tenderness :

"I, too, have a mother and sister, *Fräulein*, and you may be sure that if it in any way depended on me your brother would be a free man this instant—and—and I should be rewarded by a sweet girl I love—in your country." The mother and daughter gave the honest lad their hands, and there were tears in other than the ladies' eyes as they left Elliot to uncertainty, consoled by the thought that he had so humane a jailer.

CHAPTER XXIX.

TRAJAN'S KNIGHT TAKES THE KING'S PAWN.

THERE is a consecutiveness in the incidents forced upon us in life which fairly palsies the doctrines of chance. When we depart from our normal duties and occupations, in no matter what sphere, the first adventure in the undertaking inevitably involves a sequence of the unexpected, which, when we read, we set down as the fabric of the

poets' vision. Read any biography your eye may light on in your well-stored shelves, from Plutarch and Pliny to Boswell and Trevelyan, and you will be struck by the truth of this and forced to own its application. Did you ever study the maneuvers of the ant, separated by chance from the home highway? How he encounters the ambuscaded sparrow, how warily he circumvallates every dubious debouch from the path he has set himself, how he invents defense and overcomes prodigies, until finally arriving at the common camp and finding the guards set and the portals closed, he intrenches himself under a neighboring mound, with every inlet sealed, to await the morning sally of his comrades? I have before now watched with wonder and delight a common spider, taken by curiosity, or malevolent higher power of the human sort, and set upon a miniature island in a miniature lakelet. I have seen the undaunted little architect set out philosophically on a tour of inspection around the entire coast of the tiny land. I have seen him, without a single appliance of meteorological science, gauge the wind, secure a stray leaf and set his argonaut sail for the mainland, and arrive there as composedly as Columbus at Santa Cruz. More persevering students tell of the little wizard thrown Crusoe-like on an island, studying the wind, measuring the strait and fastening one end of his web to an eminence, launching himself in a web-woven balloon and carried by the wind to *terra firma*. An exploit is like a lie—to make exigencies come to a sane conclusion, a dozen more must be invented to support it.

Trajan had nothing of the adventurous in him. He was not even a romanticist in literature or art. He was a realist. The monotone of Corot was his ideal of contemporary painting, the early prose of George Elliot his highest admiration in romance. Dickens, with his hair-breadth escapes and *invraisemblable* episodes, he abhorred. Thackeray he delighted in, but more as a master wit than novelist. So it may be readily inferred that his present anomalous situation was

neither congenial nor natural. He did not shrink from peril, but he held all sorts of compromise of man's personal safety, as a proof of recklessness or wanton disregard of the humanities that rule well-regulated lives. He summed up the predicament humorously, as one where adventures had been thrust upon him, by no seeking of his own. But if he had reflected a moment he would have seen that the very air he breathed was full of the exciting and unexpected. How little had the dull king, lolling in his episcopal grace's cushions yonder, imagined two months before that, ere the crimson of autumn had dyed the vernal tresses of summer, he should be virtual lord of France, with his girdle of iron and his scepter of death around the walls of Paris!

Trajan had secured his courier to Jules Favre, who bore the message agreed upon. He was despatched so soon as the chancellor had made known his disposition, and now he was free to devote himself for the time being to Elliot. Edith had taken note of the room her brother occupied. She drew a plan, which gave Trajan the interior. His next business was to reconnoiter the approaches from the outside, like a prudent commander taking every contingency into account. He did not confide his projects to Mrs. Arden or Edith, though the latter conjectured the purpose of the room plan. Late that night Busch sent for the young man, and with a very serious and pitying expression, told him that Elliot's case was very grave; that the officer had made his charges in due form attested by two witnesses, and that without a miracle in his favor, the youth would, at the very least, be sent to the prison of Spandau, until the close of the war. "All that can be done," he added, "is for Madame Arden to go at once to Paris and lay the matter before the American minister. He may be able to get the king to interfere. The chancellor can not and does not feel like urging, because, as it is, the king feels restive under the dominating sway of the minister. I have procured a safe conduct for the ladies to go to Paris."

"And the prisoner—what is to become of him?" asked Trajan, striving to speak calmly.

"He will be forwarded to Cologne to-morrow. The order is already issued. But you need have no fear; he will be well treated." Grasping the kind doctor's hand, Trajan thanked him with an emotion that he never thought he should feel for an agent of the man of blood and iron.

He waited until dinner was ended before distressing the ladies with the sinister news. He modified the danger as much as he could, and spoke hopefully of the intervention of the American minister, who was a warm friend of Mrs. Arden. They were to set out at midnight, and Trajan advised that they should stop at Crécy *en route*, take Mrs. Briscoe, Bella, and Kate, and order their household furnishing and the like packed, and leave the house in the care of the *maire*. It was then eight o'clock; by nine they could reach Crécy, and at midnight join the convoy as it passed through the village of St. Germain on the road to Paris.

"But surely you will accompany us?" asked Mrs. Arden anxiously.

"No. I am compelled to remain here. I shall not quit the place until I learn what befalls Elliot." He glanced at Edith as he spoke, and she, putting her arms around her mother's neck, said cheerfully:

"Of course, mamma, Trajan must stay while we go to work for the release at the other end of the line."

A half hour later the carriage with the German guard sharing the seat with Bernard drove rapidly away in the darkness, laden with heavy hearts, and leaving one at least, not light, though there was love-light in the eye that followed the vehicle and caught the last glimpse of the pallid face leaning out of the window. By nine o'clock the town was profoundly quiet. Save the regular tramp of the sentries before the public buildings, there were only occasional steps heard on the pavement. The cathedral clock struck nine as Trajan went to his room. Unlocking a closet

he took out a pair of common cotton trowsers, a dark gray blouse, and a peasant's hat, and a pair of wooden shoes. He took a revolver from a drawer, slipped it with a small supply of cartridges into the capacious pocket of the blouse and tied the whole together in a bundle. Opening the door into the hall, and finding the coast clear, he stole cautiously up another flight of stairs, and then, by means of a ladder, to the roof. In a few minutes he was on the low mansard under which Elliot lay imprisoned. Taking a slender but stout cord from his pocket he fastened it to the bundle, and leaning over the water trough, lowered it almost to the ground. Then, tying the cord to the lead projection of the water-spout, he slipped back to his own room, blew out the light, and ran down the stairs noisily to the street.

An instant later he was cordially welcomed by the lieutenant, who was radiant at the prospect of his beloved game. Trajan affirmed gayly that he was just in the humor to play and meant to vanquish the best in five games if it took till morning. The delighted lieutenant agreed with all his heart. The games went on silently, interrupted only by copious potations of beer, which Trajan insisted on sharing with the guards, a breach of discipline which the lieutenant good-naturedly permitted in return for the bliss of a night's unbroken *schach spiel.* The clanging tongue of St. Etienne's bell droned out midnight. The fifth game had been played, and Trajan had won three when he suggested that as he was dead tired and sleepy he would lie down for twenty minutes and be ready to renew the wager. The lieutenant hailed the suggestion with delight, and conducted Trajan into a hallway at right angles with the bureau. "Here is my cot. I will allow you twenty-five minutes. So make the best of your time."

Trajan uttered a loud and prolonged yawn.

"Sh—sh—" said the Saxon. "It's bad enough to be confined without being kept awake. Have some sympathy for the unfortunate. The American is next door."

Trajan, laughing, threw himself on the cot and his host withdrew. No sooner had his steps sounded on the floor of the outer room than Trajan, rising, groped softly, unshod, to the open door. The hall was in profound darkness. Cautiously feeling his way, he reached the door of the room in which Elliot was confined. Edith had described it as bolted on the outside, and in an instant he had slipped back the bolt. He grew weak with anguish, when, having turned the handle, the door remained immovable. He ran his hand down—possibly another bolt—no—but nearly up to his breast, a key was in the lock. He turns it softly. Now the door swings out, toward him. The room is dark as the hall, but he can tell by a gentle breathing where the cot is, and has the plan of the room sketched by Edith vividly in his mind.

He bends over the sleeper and gently shakes him, whispering in his ear distinctly, but not above his breath, "Don't speak; make no noise; be ready; sh—" Elliot startled, fortunately does not cry out. He starts in wonder and in a thrilling of suspense, waits. Trajan reaches the window, which is guarded by horizontal bars, but wide enough apart to enable him to haul the bundle through. He opens it as he returns to Elliot, puts his mouth to his ear, and whispers, "Dress quickly." By Trajan's help, Elliot is in the clothes within two minutes. "Now I'll go ahead. Carry your shoes in your hand. When we reach the angle leading to the bureau, I will enter, and when you see the light go out, push boldly to the doorway. I will distract the guards from seeing you."

"Who is it? who is it befriending me?" exclaimed Elliot, gluing his lips to Trajan's ear.

"Sh—! follow me." He closed the door as they emerged, and taking Elliot's hand led him to the lieutenant's chamber. "Now," he continued as he slipped his own shoes on, "stay here till I disappear around the corner of the wall. Then follow and stand there until you see the lights go out; then go to your left, to the railway, and follow that to the canal. Avoid the German pickets—keep due west until you

reach Paris; there let the French pickets capture you." Steps were heard in the bureau. Both stood in breathless suspense. The steps receded and an echo could be heard on the pavement outside.

"Now be ready—be cool, keep your wits about you, and don't use your pistol with soldiers in any event." Saying this Trajan passed noiselessly through the hallway, turned the corner and entered the bureau. The lieutenant was not to be seen. Taking out a cigar, Trajan offered one to the guard who stood sleepily leaning against the door. He came forward to get it and as he did so Trajan dropped into the chair.

"I'm too lazy to get up for a light," he said yawning, "give me the candle." As the soldier came toward him with it, Trajan tipped the chair backward in the favorite attitude of his compatriots and the soldier had to pass to his side to hand him the light. It was barely in Trajan's hand when the chair slipped, and as he fell backward the light was adroitly quenched, while with a laugh he seized the soldier to aid him to arise. But he was unaccountably clumsy and managed in his struggles to take up a minute or more. It took another for the soldier to find the candle, which proved to have been broken beyond use.

"*Ach Gott*," exclaimed the soldier impatiently, "there's plenty in the cupboard." One was soon found and lighted. Trajan looked anxiously toward the passage and then went to the door. The street was perfectly tranquil. He asked for the lieutenant, and the soldier with a wink said he had been invited for a walk.

"In that case I will go home and turn in; tell him he can have his revenge by coming to my room if he feels disposed." With this Trajan in devout gratitude for the chances which had aided his ruse, and the lieutenant's sudden exit, not the least among them, returned to his lodging. Leaving his shoes at his door he stole to the roof and secured the tell-tale cord, which on reaching his room he cut up into bits and

disposed of by wrapping around a rickety bedstead and in other fragmentary ways to mislead investigation should suspicion be directed toward him. He had been in bed an hour or more and fallen into a doze when he was aroused by a loud knock at the door. He struck a match and throwing the door open, the lieutenant stood before him leering and half tipsy.

"You deserve to have a week's *katzenjammer*," he said unsteadily, "for deserting your post. But I'm bound to finish the game." He had the board and chessmen and Trajan, nothing loth, sat down with the young enthusiast. But he was not in condition to play. His moves were wild and haphazard. He was disastrously mated. Rising, he threw himself on Trajan's bed and was soon fast asleep. Trajan sat at the open window and dozed fitfully until the hot sun shining in aroused him. The lieutenant was sleeping peacefully. Trajan dressed himself noiselessly, meaning to go out and leave the sleeper undisturbed—but he opened his eyes, rubbed them, and not comprehending the strange surroundings, looked in puzzled uncertainty at Trajan.

"Have you slept off your spree, or are you in *katzenjammer* condition?" asked the latter, as the officer rose to a sitting posture. He realized all, and with a conscience-stricken exclamation asked tragi-comically—"How could you let me remain here all night?"

"No harm done, old fellow; nobody will be any the wiser."

"But there is harm; if it should be found out I should be disgraced and cashiered."

"Oh, it won't be found out, no one will know of it but your own guards, and you can ——"

A tramping of heavy feet was heard coming to the door. There was a loud knock and it was pushed open before Trajan could bid the intruder enter. It was the landlord, with one of the lieutenant's guards, groaning and quavering.

"What in God's name has happened? Why are you here—are you an idiot? Speak!" cried the enraged officer.

"*Ach Gott, Ach Gott!*" groaned the soldier. "He is gone—the spy has escaped."

With a moan, that was almost a shriek, the terrified lieutenant pushed the trembling soldier aside, nearly overturning the gaping landlord, who, ignorant of German, thought his company had gone crazy. Trajan told him the trouble and there was no consternation on the Gaul's face as the other turned away to conceal his own sentiment.

"When did he get away, and how?" he asked the soldier, who stood dazed, not knowing whether to go or stay.

"*Ach Gott, bewahr*—I know not. It was five o'clock when I knocked at the door to give him his coffee. The bolt was firm, but the key was not in the door. There was no answer from the inside, and I called the corporal, who was just relieving the guard. The door was broken open; the spy's clothes were on the floor, but he was nowhere to be seen. *Ach Gott*, what will happen? We shall be shot—we shall be imprisoned."

Trajan pacified the poor fellow, and found the effort not at all difficult. It's wonderful the eloquent reserves of consolation we find to mitigate the misfortunes of others, that we are conscious of having a share in bringing about. Trajan felt that he could have exhorted with an angel's tongue, if the whole Prussian army instead of the poor outwitted guard had been bemoaning the same or a similar event. He sent the poor fellow away with money to get beer, and began to reflect on his own situation. Should the details of the night reach Bismarck's ears, he had no hope of hoodwinking that penetrating intelligence, but he counted on the fact of the escape not reaching him, since the incident was not within his immediate jurisdiction to investigate. At noon he received a message from Busch to come to him. The old doctor scrutinized

him sharply, as he asked dryly if he had heard of the escape.

Yes, he had heard. How did it happen? But the doctor retorted crossly that he couldn't be expected to know. He had great news for him, however. Jules Favre would be at Meaux at five o'clock, and had asked that he, Trajan, be permitted to join him; and here ends Trajan's diplomatic exploits. Jules Favre's fruitless mission to Férrières, where Bismarck forced him to follow on a ridiculous game of hide and seek, is part of the bouffe history of that sad time, but as it did not concern any of the persons whose destiny forms the woof of this record, I leave Bismarck and the honest Busch, bombastic, egotistic, cruel at times, but in the main softened by much of that *gemüthlichkeit*, the absence of which he so vigorously laments, in that edifying masterwork in which he apotheosizes his divinity of blood and iron.

While Paris was opening its eyes to the unwonted experiences of imprisonment, the next morning, Trajan, with the unhappy Favre, passed secretly, by connivance of the military, into the northern gate, and an hour later he was again in the Rue Dragon, affording infinite comfort to Betty and Trip. But impatient to learn the fate of the Ardens, so soon as he had bathed and dressed, he drove to the Rue Chaillot to learn their whereabouts. The benignant face of the minister was well known to the young man, and his impatience was soon satisfied by learning that the Ardens, Mrs. Briscoe with Philip and Kate were at their home in the Rue François Premier. Trajan was not a model of the repose that marks the caste of the Vere de Vere, as he told the servant to make known that he was come. In the great drawing-room, not yet relieved of its summer mufflings of brown holland, he recalled the suspensive state of his faculties on that May day five months before, when Elliot, eager in his romantic constancy and boyish devotion, presented him to the friends who had since so completely changed the turbid current of his life.

He was in the humor now with new hope at heart to smile at the odd mingling of the comic and tragic in the topsy-turvy drama. He was in such high spirits, so buoyantly confident of the future, so radiantly content with the present, that he contemplated Theo's whimsical handiwork in bringing him to Elliot and then alienating him, with humorous wonder, rather than hatred. Had the siren come within his reach, he would, perhaps, have made recondite jokes on the hegira of Ulysses and his escape from the Circean spell. His reflections were at that moment interrupted by exclamations; both his hands were snatched by Miss McNair, and I verily believe she would have given him a vicarious hug if the depressing Philip had not been among the chattering group. They were all there, and every one had a question to ask, either by word of mouth or the imperative interrogatory of the eye. His tale, so far as prudent, was soon told, and then looking about him he asked:

"Where's Elliot?"

"Where *is* Elliot?" echoed Mrs. Arden blankly, sinking into a mountain of rustling holland. "Why, haven't you brought him with you? You didn't leave him in—in—prison ——"

Trajan recounted the events of the famous chess tournament and the check to the king, as he picturesquely styled Elliot's flight under the nose of the guard. "But," he continued, "there's no cause to worry. Meaux is thirty miles from here. Elliot will be compelled to lie quiet during the day and make his way at night, when the camp fires will warn him from Prussian outposts. It will take him at least three nights, unaccustomed as he is to woods and fields. It will perhaps be a week before we get track of him, for we must count on detentions at the French outposts, and indeed you need not be surprised if he is refused admission to Paris at all; had you not been sent under flag of truce, by the intermediation of the American minister, you would not have been admitted."

"I can affirm that," said Philip eagerly. "It was only by invoking the American minister, through the timely presence of Trochu at the outer forts, that I got in. I was regarded alternately as a Prussian spy and a Bonapartist and treated very cavalierly by the Mobiles, whose patriotism exceeds their sense of subordination or proficiency in discipline."

"But tell me, Kent—you who pose as a sage and sometimes cynic, how in the world came you to play such a blue-fire scene with the German? I can understand Elliot giving way to his indignation, ignorant as he is of the arbitrary and lawless methods of a conquering army, but you—a soldier and a sage—the affair is beyond me."

Philip laughed and reddened. "Now that all has turned out well, I confess to some surprise myself," he said. "But you have no idea of the intolerable and insulting conduct of that ruffian, Rauberkeller — was there ever an apter name? I can readily imagine him robbing cellars, as his name implies, all his life. I was exasperated beyond endurance, and I thought an outbreak would be more likely to teach the fellow that he had no longer a timid and browbeaten Frenchman to deal with. I knew perfectly well that his words would have caused his dismissal by any court in the army, and I fancied that the exhibition of this knowledge would terrify him, for there's nothing so craven as the cowardice of German officials in dealing with their superiors.

"I realized so soon as he came to Les Charmettes that there would be trouble, for I have followed the accounts in the English press, revealing the unheard-of tyranny of the invaders in their exactions upon the inhabitants, natives and foreigners alike. I knew that the family had nothing to fear from the soldiers, nor the officers, while sober; and convinced that Elliot could only be saved from annoyance and perhaps imprisonment in a Prussian fortress, I determined, the moment he was hurried away, to fly to Paris that night. I easily evaded the German pickets, but had

considerable difficulty with the French, and was really a prisoner until, at the legation, the minister undertook to be responsible for me!"

"It is from the legation we shall get our first news of Elliot, then," said Mrs. Arden, with a sigh of relief. "The minister will think us mad people, for at my prayer he is already negotiating for Elliot's release."

"For a modest family," remarked Bella, "we certainly have been the cause of a good deal of turmoil, and I should think, Trajan, you would fly us as you would the plague."

"Folks sometimes do not mind plagues," responded the arch deceiver, slyly looking at Bella and blushing foolishly.

"If it took such a form as this willful young woman, a wise man would mind it a good deal," Philip felt called upon to aver as he bowed to Bella.

"Plagues not unlike that in form I could make up my mind to endure very philosophically," insinuated Trajan, artlessly, while his eye wandered to where "Somebody," blushing violently, made him warning signs to change the topic.

Bella pretended not to understand that the words were not an homage to herself, and, like a tried social tactician, flouted the holland from the piano and covered Edith's confusion in a crash from which emerged the brilliant opening notes of "Richard, O, Mon Roi."

To the group there, wrapt in harmony, and with minds diversely busy in reflection, serene, troubled, happy, wise, and otherwise, came, with jaunty confidence and the atmosphere of inextinguishable gayety, Theo in the company of that great personage, the prince.

"We learned at the legation that, like the prophet's people, you had repented at the last moment, fled from the Amalekites and entered the walls of Jericho; but where's the prince of the House of David?" she added, as in the course of her salutation Elliot's absence struck her.

"He's tarrying out of Jericho till his beard be grown," cried the inveterate Kate, unable to resist a dart.

But Theo was not in the mood to risk an encounter then and there. She looked her inquiry at Mrs. Arden. When the story was told her she was a good deal subdued, and asked sympathetically if something could not be done to facilitate the wanderer's return. Informed that Trajan made no doubt of Elliot's safety, she turned with regained composure to that personage and asked, looking at him unwinkingly:

"Pray, tell us your adventures with the Prussians. Jules gives hints of wonders that you did at Metz and Sédan. The colony is full of it, and I am told that the men have determined that you shall make the speech at the Thanksgiving dinner, if there's enough left to eat in Paris, when Thanksgiving comes."

"Oh, I shall put the story in the form of an Iliad and publish as George Sand and Alfred de Musset retold their lives," Trajan answered, lightly.

Theo and the prince were retained for dinner, to the great discomfiture of two or three who shared the feast. But the evening was a revival of old times, and the prince went away declaring that Bella was "adorable"—quite wearying his companion with his prolix raptures. Elliot's absence at this juncture frightened her. He was the pivotal piece in the mechanism of her aims. Through him the Arden household was open to her in an intimate way, indispensable for the regulation of the march of events—a hundredfold more necessary now that his absence left Trajan free to make himself an element of mischief.

The prince's raptures over Bella did not trouble her. She knew the French nature well, and she knew the time and the weapon to employ which should dissolve the simulated passion, as a dab of the dish-clout effaces the mist-made picture upon a window-pane. Jules must set seriously to winning Bella—for, in spite of her penetrating intelligence, Theo fell

into the Frenchman's theory—perhaps from the universality of the exemplification about her, that any woman was to be won by any man who seriously set himself about it.

She saw it done every day ; she had Clare's case in her own household ; in fact, she knew no instance where it had failed save in her own. But that, she would have said—had she been confronted with it, merely made the exception proving the rule ; and she would have been more firmly convinced in her belief, knowing that Trajan might have won the day by a little persistence. Indeed, here the contradiction of this curious character presents the strangest perplexity. There were moments, mad moments, when she turned with unutterable delight to the memory of the young fellow's chivalric courtship. That all the heart she had to give was his she knew from the first, and fought against the seductive danger. But there came a passionate yearning to be again the object of that tumultuous, self-forgetting, absorbing passion.

She had no idea that it had lessened a single degree in Trajan ; a woman's wickedness is never so entirely black that she can believe in the permanent alienation of her lover's love. It is an inner conviction that coldness, cruelty, what you will, can not shake, for it comes from the one divine spark, that abides in the most abandoned of us ; it is conviction that where a woman's love is given it clings, in spite of all the destructive agencies of man's more selfish nature, diverse occupations and pleasures. It was this unshaken faith that made Trajan, as he stood in the summer-house denouncing her, far dearer to her than when he had pled his cause and asked her hand. She believed his interposition the mad impulse of jealousy, and the harshness of his words secretly fed the fires of her egotism and, so to speak, sensual vanity. There were dreary hours of relaxing ambition, abhorrence of every thing visible and attainable, when she was ready to abandon the purpose to which she had dedicated herself. These impulses grew upon her after Clare's princely marriage, though Lafayette had not turned

out the facile dupe she had counted upon. When the question of the *dot* was delicately suggested by Jules, he had answered promptly that he "reckoned that his wife was an American; that American ways were good enough for his mother and family and they must satisfy Clare's."

It was a severe shock after all her scheming, but she bore it good-humoredly, telling Jules that he would have to be on his good behavior with his brother-in-law, as a means of aiding his fortunes in an emergency. But Jules was greatly irritated. He reproached Theo for permitting the marriage, as, unless the family gained in visible splendor by it, the whole town would laugh at them for a vulgar *mésalliance*, unredeemed by the affluence which alone excuses such freaks.

After the visit to the Ardens', Jules was advised of his opportunity, in Elliot's absence, to gain the ear of Bella, who had always shown a preference for him. It thus came to pass that the young man was a frequent guest in the Rue François I. He rode admirably, and Bella never refused a gallop to the Bois, her two adorers escorting her. Social observances had almost ended in the besieged city and such persistence naturally took an intimate informality.

An event that happened one day, as the party were returning from the Bois de Boulogne, gave Jules still better standing in Bella's eyes. As the three dashed out into the broad roadway of the avenue, a drunken Mobile suddenly lurched from behind a tree and, whether by accident or design, fired his musket under the nose of Bella's horse. The terrified beast threw himself back on his haunches, then, with a sideward leap, shot back toward the park, into it and through the broad main road directly toward the lake. Jules, with admirable presence of mind, flew after the beast, which was beyond Bella's management.

Darting into a cross path that would head the flying horse just at the edge of the water, he tore through the wounding branches and emerged from the thicket at the

instant Bella's horse reached the steep edge of the bank. By a surprising quickness of movement he reached out, as the horse attempted to leap past, caught the bridle and slid to the ground, all at the same time—halting the vicious beast almost on the edge of the road.

"Handsomely done; I make you my felicitation," exclaimed the prince who had followed Bella's horse.

Bella was not much discomposed, though she realized the peril.

"You have saved me from a disagreeable drenching if not a broken neck, Mr. Carnot," she said, as the grooms of the Rocher Restaurant led the horses away.

Bella, as we have seen, lived much in books. Her admiration for Tito, expressed to Elliot, was based solely upon the fanciful conditions of his life. His cowardice, perversity, and ingratitude she lost sight of. One single evidence of heroism would have completely redeemed him. I think that at Crécy she was in danger of idealizing Trajan into the heroic figure of her dreams. Had Elliot's fortune led him into some striking act of daring, the love that she strove to repress would have been too overmastering for the restraints of her pride and waywardness. I think she would have relished better the vigorous courtship of the Norman duke who drew his indifferent princess from her horse and dragged her in the mud, rather than the tranquil right-of-possession sort of love that had irritated her in Elliot, until his capture by Theo showed her that the lover was right; that her heart was his, whatever rebellion the head made. The preference of the prince was small compensation for what, she felt with despair, she had deliberately trifled away. There were moments of anguish and self-reproach when she would have abased herself to letting Elliot see her repentance, but torments like these were in the silence of the night when the distractions of nature could not save her from the brooding thought of her folly.

Though she encouraged Jules' friendliness, she did it

without dreaming of his purpose. Indeed, the very absence of such a suspicion made her intercourse more kindly, and encouraged Jules into the unwarranted belief that he was gaining his end. Much of the old assertion had left Bella since the early Crécy days, and the growing anxiety at Elliot's silence, while an affliction to the family, was a misery to her that only one other in the household suspected. Kate had never been deceived. She had watched Bella from babyhood and learned her nature, better even than the mother. She knew that the cousins were lovers almost from the hour they met after childhood.

CHAPTER XXX.

A MASQUE OF CUPID.

NOW sunshine bathes mountain and valley; our banners are flung to summer breezes; joy is our herald and contentment our arbiter; the heavens of our friends are hung in rose and amethyst; the bulbul chants on the household lintel; Aphrodite leads in the lunar group that dots the canopy; we are pavilioned in peace, and gladness is the one chord in the harp of life. That is to say, our little stage is set for a feast; our various players, harbored in happiness, for the present, at least, echo only the jocund strains of life's gamut. On a fine morning, before the filmy frosts of the early October were drunken by the thirsty sunbeams, Trajan, eager and triumphant, sounded a lusty peal at the mansion in the Rue François I. Mrs. Arden, pale, wan and despairing, met him in the drawing-room with a little scream of wonder, not wholly terror, as he held out a letter addressed in a well-known hand to herself; but, too impatient to let her learn from the sheet, Trajan anticipated the contents; "Elliot is in London," and he threw up his hat and moved his available glove, quite as if he were alone the recipient of the

joyful assurance. The poor mother's eyes were dim, and she couldn't for a moment do any thing but look tremulously at the characters on the letter.

"Call Edith, Trajan, please," she cried, and fluttered into a corner to hug the precious sheets as she opened them. "Dear me, what a long letter! I can never get through it." But she was making great progress when the startled Edith, presently followed by Bella, Kate, and last of all Mrs. Briscoe, came in arrayed in the peignoirs that ladies adorn themselves in of a morning. The good news told itself on the faces of Trajan and Mrs. Arden, and the volleys of questions were suspended, while Edith, with a passing smile at Trajan which finished the remaining sense of decorum in that young man's possession at the moment, gently but imperiously took the precious letter, and beginning at the "Dearest Mother," read the closely-written pages through. He had arrived in London that night, and hastened to relieve the anxiety they must feel. He feared he could get no word to them, but had been assured that the British Minister would forward the letter from Versailles to Paris by a flag of truce to Crécy. Then, after a vigorous summing up of the scenes at Les Charmettes, and his arrest and imprisonment in Meaux, he told of the startling event in the Meaux prison—how some one had slipped in, given him a peasant's suit, put him at the threshold of freedom and disappeared; that, as the unknown had spoken in the German tongue, he could think of no one but Jules Carnot risking so much for him—at which point there was an indignant toss of Somebody's head and a general murmur of amusement.

"I got on the train at Colombes, a little station not eight miles north of the city, and here I am, sound and safe, and in such good spirits as a man can be who is kept from his mother, his Edith, and his other valued friends and kin. Now as I dare not go back to Crécy and you can not get to Paris, I suggest that you pack up at once and come to me here. There's no telling how long the siege will last. We

can go to Rome for the winter and wait events. Don't fail to let me know the name of the chap that got me out of the Prussian claws.

"If you love me, and I sometimes flatter myself you do, you will do him such homage as such intrepidity deserves, no matter what his rank, surroundings, or previous condition of servitude. I'll stake my head it was Carnot, who is brave as a lion, and I shall not be sorry to learn that it is to him I owe my life, for from what I see in the daily journals these Prussians are reviving the fine old methods that the first Bonaparte broke up, in the days of that political abomination, the Holy Roman Empire, and I should have been either shot, or sent like Silvio Pellico and Lafayette, to a German *cachot*, to wait the good pleasure of fellows whose pleasure is mankind's pain. This sentiment would delight the heart of that noblest Roman of them all, Trajan, whom I see in my mind's eye carrying a musket and raging like the lion he is over the defeats of his beloved French, partly consoled, I've no doubt, by the gourd-like Republic that has arisen in the nation's night, to wither with the rise of its sun. My love to him, with grace, penitence and peace."

There were tender afterthoughts which need not be repeated. They gave great comfort to the family, who were for the first time made acquainted with Trajan's startling strategy in the liberation of the prisoner. He had allowed them to suppose that it was effected by a diplomatic ruse. Edith, you may be sure, was very proud and happy when Mrs. Arden, going over to the abashed hero, drew his handsome face up and kissed him sweetly, leaving the mother's benediction to tell what the grateful mother's lips did not dare trust themselves to say.

"You are henceforth my son, our home is your home, if you will have it so. The feeling has long been in my heart. I think this justifies me in saying it. Let a happy mother feel that such devotion as yours is not wholly beyond her power to answer in kind, be it ever so small."

Trajan's eyes, which were noted for looking the person addressing him in the face, were averted, and by a strange chance, as they wandered over Mrs. Arden's shoulder fell upon two bright eyes, swimming in tears. By a monstrous perversion of conversational equity, it was to these eyes he seemed to speak when he said, with a totally gratuitous vagueness:

"Elliot is dearer to me than the life he saved, and your over-appreciation robs me of the only merit of a duty gladly done. I—I—but don't let us talk about that."

"And pray, Mr. Modesty, do our similar sentiments, almost similarly expressed, rob you of your transcendental reward in saving my life? You must take into account that you have been doing the rescue by wholesale in the Arden family, and that in our miserable opulence we can't get the chance to play Bayards to our friends."

"But who knows how soon you may prove a Jeanne d'Arc, Bella," retorted Trajan, giving her a glance of gratitude for the timely diversion.

"Very good, but there's no Talbot for me to conquer, no king to crown, no—"

"Why not take the prince?" asked Kate maliciously. "He is of the lineal caste."

"I think, Kate, you must have been born with venom on your tongue, as the Plantagenet was with teeth in his jaws. Your contributions to current conversation are like the alkalies in a crucible, both dissolvent and astringent," and Bella looked half angry, half abashed, at the imperturbable spinster.

"If you can tell a man by the books he reads, I can tell the last volume Bella's been browsing in without looking at the Bunsen lying on her table," and Kate laughed complacently as one who has drawn the enemy's last shot and has a reserve still.

"Well, Trajan, it's settled that you are to be the protector of this bereaved family until the outlawed prince comes to

his own," interposed Mrs. Briscoe, dreading Bella's sharp sallies under Kate's pungent teasing.

"Which prince? as one should say under which king, Bezonian," asked Kate, as if determined to continue the dangerous theme.

"You are an unbearable mischief-maker, Kate dear," Mrs. Arden remonstrated placidly. "Do let Bella enjoy her science and her vagaries; what harm is there in them? I'm sure I wish the indolent Edith would take half the trouble to store her mind," and she looked any thing but discontented as that traduced young person smiled in agreeable deprecation at Trajan, who had taken his place at the piano, where presently Edith, intent upon convincing him of the superior beauty of a melody of Ambroise Thomas's to his favorite Lohengrin, found the greatest difficulty in laying her hand on the sheet, which she was positive she had been practicing the last thing the evening before. Both of them blushed with guilty consciousness when Bella, coming over, laid her hand on the music, lying almost the first in the book.

"Trajan, you will stay to breakfast; and remember we shall be much mortified if you make the slightest pretense of acting as a stranger in this house." Saying this, Mrs. Arden left the room, taking Elliot's letter, to read by herself, as fond mothers are in the habit of doing, over and over again, until the fragile pages grow dim under the secret tears and rapture. I venture to believe she found as much joy in those boyish exuberances as two of the people in the drawing-room who sillily thought the whole world came to an apex, and the point of it was under their feet, giving them the ambrosial clouds to breathe in, as we are told Jupiter of old entertained his newest love before Christianity had come to decree the exile of the gods. Never did the tide of love run so smoothly. Trajan was terrified, with something of the fatalistic creed of the Persian lingering in him. "When the house is finished, Death comes to occupy it."

He didn't know whether Mrs. Arden suspected the tie that had knotted the two hearts. He knew that Bella was aware of his rapture, and he could not fail to see that Kate not only knew, but was a strong partisan. He was not ready yet to speak, for he hoped to win name and fame before asking the consent of the family. Edith's had been given already.

It is simply miraculous how these opportunities occur. In the memoranda from which this history is traced, I find no mention of the formal declaration. To be sure the letter left at Les Charmettes told the story, but I come across nothing in which Edith says any thing on the subject. The fortnight of uncertainty enveloping Elliot's existence would be, it seems to me, too anxious a time to talk of love, but Kate, when asked about it, replied with unnecessary asperity :

"Ye must be a puir daft auld body not to know that there's no much talk and yeaing and naying in matters of that sort. Why, mon, the lass just adored th' brave lad fra th' day her brither tould the goold in him. It's no th' word that tells sic thing as luv no more than bletherin' prayers that maks the Christian comfortable."

While the trio stood at the piano a messenger arrived from the ministry with a packet for Mrs. Arden. It was likewise in Elliot's hand, and contained letters addressed to Theo, Bella and Edith.

"Jezebel 'ill find cauld comfort in the news," cried Kate as the letters were laid out and Theo's despatched by a servant. "She'll ha' her papist dukes and counts to console her, an' she'll no miss him long, I'll warrant."

An hour or two later Theo came with her letter, not knowing whether the family had received the news. She took out the epistle and Kate remarked that it filled but three note sheets. She smiled grimly at the discovery.

"Who could his unknown friend be?" asked Theo when she found her news known. "I suppose some one sent by the minister. Such daring deserves boundless admiration."

"I think the man has gotten the reward that men of a certain sort hold best," insinuated Bella, glancing casually at Trajan. "Indeed, Theo," she added solemnly, "I think that, manlike, he had exacted his reward in advance."

"What an ignoble fellow. I'm just as glad not to know such a creature," said Theo, shocked at the baseness of the mercenary unknown. "It will please Elliot all the better, for to such an one the obligation is discharged with ready money; while had it been a gentleman, a lifetime could not have given opportunities to attest his feeling." And Theo regarded the group with such an air as Chrysostom might have worn when he illustrated the true life by revealing his own constancy and abnegation.

Trajan coincided very gravely in Theo's homily, to the no small amusement of the audience, who had been charged by that diplomate to make no mention of his handiwork in the rescue of Elliot. Theo felt that she had committed an error, by the thinly-concealed jocosity with which her sally had been received, though far from suspecting the cause. Her senses were quick as a dormouse to the mere vibration of doubt or hostility in the air, and realizing that she was the victim of some mystification, like a cautious mariner in an unknown channel, she drew in sail and dropped her anchor in the waters of silence. Mrs. Arden could not understand Trajan's motive for preserving secrecy on the subject, but Edith and Kate were by no means in the dark. He did not mean to exact from Elliot's gratitude what he knew must come sooner or later through repentance and contrition.

At the *déjeuner à la fourchette*, Mrs. Arden, who had again read Elliot's anabasis, as Bella christened the letter in her merry pedantry, and who secretly thought the adventures more wonderful than Xenophon's story, returned to her hospitable intent concerning Trajan. He must join Philip in guarding the family deprived of its natural protector, and should use a room in the house to paint, instead of hiding

himself from them in the Latin Quarter—at least until they could make the necessary preparations to rejoin Elliot in London, whither he was cordially urged to accompany them and thence to Rome for the winter. But Trajan declined to quit his garret, where, as he said humorously, his family were already in a state of revolt at his frequent absences. Whereupon the invitation was extended to Madame Betty and the frisky Trip.

But protesting that his ties were too intimate and tender to permit of removing wholly from the Rue Dragon, Trajan compromised with the kind lady, by binding himself to renew the life begun at Crécy and disastrously interrupted almost so soon as begun. It happened to be Saturday, and the young ladies, desirous of penetrating the mysteries of the studio, old and young set out for that aerial temple, thereby depriving Jules of his accustomed *tête-à-tête* and ride with the coveted heiress, and as a consequence arousing Theo to the execution of more decisive measures in that game in which, though she knew she held all the arms against helpless adversaries, she distrusted time and delay as her secret antagonists. Trajan had arranged with the head of Amédée's school that the small boy should spend every Saturday afternoon either with himself or Madame Agay.

It was while his visitors were in the studio that the child was brought in and with a cry of joy leaped into the arms of his blushing and embarrassed guardian. They all admired the little fellow's charming face and fondling, pretty ways, and learned his story with interest. The impulsive Edith proposed that he should be taken home, instead of languishing with strangers, and Trajan thought the idea an excellent one. It was agreed that he should make a holiday visit only for the present, and when the ladies drove home the happy child sobbed with joy and wound his little arms around Edith's neck, being assured that he should go only a short time longer to the grim tabernacle of learning where he had been miserable and lonely.

All the world loves a lover ; never were the fellows in the *Beaux Arts* so drawn to Trajan as in these halcyon days. Eyes far less keen and hearts far less kindly than the merry godless rogues of the quarter could have read the lad's secret. He was joked now and then on his felicity, but never to the extent of embarrassing him. Many a flowing bumper of the liquid sunshine of the valleys of Champaigne was employed to divert the merry company at Madame Bonjean's from the delicate topic. The little hostel became the rendezvous of the foreigners in the university during the first months of the siege, when food daily grew dearer in the more fashionable quarters. For, conservative in every thing, prices remained in the Latin Pays as primitive as the architecture and the life.

There was an incredible expansiveness in Trajan, under the benign radiance of his new love. That droll wag Malloy, the wit of the *ateliers*, declared that the "black divil had faded out of Gray's oies and the merry brown of the thrue lover had taken its pleece," and odd as it was, it seemed to be true. The eye is like the color in plants ; it changes under differing conditions. The lack-luster black of the big orbs had suffered a change—into something soft and genial, and you would never recognize the hilarious rogue sharing the witticisms among the *Beaux Arts* fellows, during those ambrosial October days, as the almost sinister young Werther we studied so curiously that day long ago, when love laid down the harp of life, and the heart strings cracked with impulsive despair, while the bells of reason jangled out of tune ! Rarely had he done such good work the fellows declared. His "composition" was the wonder of his comrades and his execution the delight of the masters.

He had painted a prodigious canvas for the Grovels, of the lawn and brook at Crécy, to be hung up in the mansion at Yahoo Gulch, to commemorate that episode of the family grandeur. He had orders that turned the hearts of the masters *en vogue*, green with envy. His portraits of the favored

few in the "colony" who had precedence in time, were compared to Bonnât's. It was from some exquisite miniature sketches of the combats about Metz, that the celebrated De Neuville caught the idea of the surprising series of canvases that almost consoles the bleeding hearts of the French people for their awful disasters—embalming as they do the historic courage of that gallant nation. Under the stimulus of his new mood, the sketch we once saw in surreptitious execution at Crécy, grew into a thing of such beauty that the enchanted lover, like another Parrhassius, kept the wondrous vision curtained in the studio many a day after it was ready for the surprise he meditated. That canvas, you may be sure, was never shown the fellows. Beyond Betty, Trip and Amédée, who wouldn't forego his Saturday visits to his three friends, the blue eyes on that bit of canvas were never seen, until on a certain day, Kate and Edith coming unexpectedly while the painter was out of the room, caught the radiant vision filling the dreamy atmosphere with the perfume of its beauty—the subtle odor of its love lines.

When the culprit entered and found "Somebody" face to face with a rival who had been sharing the traitor's heart—there was the prettiest little scene of jealous indignation ever seen. Betty blinked in surprise at the *dénouement*, for there was the absurdest little gurgle of rapture and then—such silly kissing as made Kate quite speechless. Betty purred in vigorous denunciation and Trip yelped with irrepressible astonishment and disapproval at such desecration of the Platonic ministrations of that sanctuary. This, however, was one of the mischiefs easily mended, and on agreeing that the picture should instantly be sent to the Rue François I., Edith promised entire forgiveness, ostentatiously sealing the self-imposed and self-ratified compact with another kiss, which wholly exhausted Kate's patience; who expressed her surprise that "the addle-headed fellow had a grain of sense left with such goings on;" and Trajan quite agreed with her, declaring it an ungenerous advantage to take of him.

"What do you mean by that, sir?" Edith asked with arching eyebrows and the most adorable pout in the world.

"Kissing goes by favor, mademoiselle, and here you've despoiled me of all that makes the *atelier* habitable, and pay me in what after all is really my due."

"Presumptuous ingrate, you shall never—*never*—"

"There don't make a simpleton o' yer'sels, ye'll be cooing at him in two minutes again and daring him to do what ye know verra weel ye're always ready to do, so keep ye're little silly play-acting for yer two silly sel's, and let me think I'm in the company of sane folk, not ejiots," and Kate made ready to quit the scene of such frivolous behaviors. Thereupon "Somebody" declared laughing that Kate was jealous because her face had not been found on the easel, and Trajan, to mollify her, promised that he would paint her with John Knox in the background, hurling anathemas at the wicked queen of Scots.

"Yer a graceless set—ye have no river'nce for any thing sacred," cried the spinster.

"Cats may look at kings and painters do put saints on canvas, Kate, so I don't desecrate in touching up even that sacred visage," said Trajan, as though taking the protest in earnest. But Kate had exhausted her wrath, and the two tyrants besetting the reluctant lover, the portrait was carried down to the carriage and the painter led in triumph with his master-piece to the Rue François I. The work was not a complete surprise to the household. Bella let fall certain notes of admiration which indicated that she had suspected the progress of the plot. Mrs. Arden, however, was gratifyingly astonished and lamented the absence of Elliot's critical judgment to pronounce the receptive benediction.

The gentle mother looked from the painter to her daughter in benign wonder, and for the first time a suspicion of the relations of the two dawned on her. It would have needed no sharp powers of divination to tell the secret that gave the eyes of the real Edith a certain expression which all the

painter's art could not catch. With a gentle flutter, the daughter threw herself into the maternal arms, and the painter, a little surprised, recompensed himself by gazing into the tender counterfeits of the eyes buried on mamma's bosom. In the mute maternal acknowledgment, he was smitten with the vague doubt of too complete, too perfect happiness.

He held his breath wondering what form fate would take to halt his step upon the threshold of his Paradise. "Who enters here leaves hope behind," was a sentiment that shadowed his effort, since he could remember. That he should have strayed along a pleasant path, reached out and plucked this rare blossom, filled him with a nameless terror. I doubt whether the man ever existed who really believed any thing he desired too good for him ; it could not therefore be the sentiment of unworthiness that filled the young man's heart with uneasiness and distrust. It was rather the feeling of a kingly heir, who suddenly sees, by a succession of deaths, not only rank and riches, but great crowns, descending upon him—and until he possesses them, dim, dreadful, threatening as the air-drawn daggers of the usurper's frenzy. Relatively Trajan knew that he had no deserving in the crown awarded him. It was an obtrusion of the fatalist doubt, rather than the moralist spirit, upon which his dread was based.

It was while the picture stood on the easel, the center of the family devotions, that Theo, who "ran in" familiarly every day, on one pretext or another, came to join the worshipers. She looked with arch good-humor at Edith, as the wonderful canvas was presented, and declared that the artist in producing a *chef d'œuvre* had wisely attempted no flattery. "Now in my case," she continued with engaging frankness, "while I admit that Mr. Gray produced a work fit for the Louvre, I am not silly enough to suppose that the portrait is not purely ideal. Confess, Mr. Gray. Isn't it true?"

Trajan laughed : "I was in the clouds about that time—

but Miss Carnot needs no idealism to make her portrait a very striking one, and if I had it to do over again—while in some respects it might be modified—I think I could give it certain touches which would make it more faithful to the original!

"Fie, Mr. Gray," spoke up Bella, "you should never be caught in so shallow a trap as that. No woman ever found flattery painted or spoken—a blemish. Tell an old woman she is young, and though you may not be believed, you will be adored; tell an ugly one she is pretty, with the reservation that she is not wise, and she will give you reputation as a man of discernment; tell a wicked, silly, heartless gad-about, that she is all these, but that her form is perfect, her face fair, and she will enshrine you."

"And pray, Bella—to gain your good graces—you, who are beautiful, wise, fine in form and all that it does not need the fancy to create, what must a man say to you to win your favor, for I know one that would give much for the secret," said Theo, turning Bella's commonplaces to dextrous account.

Bella laughed and blushed. "That's a secret; when the right one comes he will find out for himself."

"But if your theory be the true one," said Trajan reflectively, "women are won by lies."

"That's very like th' sense o' it," interjected Kate plumply.

"Well the Persian proverb holds, clouds lighter than snow, wind lighter than air, the air lighter than a feather, and women lighter than all; why not a lie, the lightest of the things of the breath, the most potent with such beings"—Philip asked, seeming to expect an answer from the portrait, at which he stared very hard.

"Every nation makes proverbs according to its kind, sir. Persian women may have justified that summing up of the collective wisdom of their men, but the sentiment is too Pagan to apply to that part of the modern world which alone holds man from his barbarian instincts."

This was Theo's contribution to the discussion, which was brought to an end by the entrance of Jules, who had great news to tell. Thiers had gone on a mission to the foreign courts and it was believed at the minister's that England was about to intervene and bring the invasion to a close. Gambetta was to set out for Tours the next day by balloon and aid in arming and organizing the departments, and the Germans had refused to permit any more exits from the beleaguered city, hoping by detaining non-combatants to starve Paris into surrender before the foreign powers could be talked over by the golden-tongued old emissary. Furthermore, he informed Trajan that by Favre's direction he had written him, Trajan, a note two hours before and sent it to the studio, requesting him to attend at the *Quai d'Orsai* where the minister had something to propose to the young *attaché*. Jules had no idea of the nature of the service, but every body begged the young man not to undertake any more adventures. Trajan, a good deal disconcerted, quit the room and as he reached the vestibule, Edith, who had slipped out by another door when his intention of going became apparent, fluttered to him with swimming eyes and a little appealing cry. The sagacious Pierre, lingering casually in the vestibule, found instant occasion to visit the dining room and the lovers were alone.

"Promise me—" "Somebody" said, with lips almost too near certain other lips—which, in fact, they had just quit. "Promise me, that you won't go from the city, you won't risk your life any more for these stranger people—"

"But what difference would it make—who'd care?" asked the young hypocrite shamelessly, and strange enough, though there wasn't a syllable in reply, as Madelaine at the crack of the door could have sworn, the doubts of the questioner seemed satisfied, for he made answer:

"By these lips I promise—not to leave Paris, by the overhead or underground route, and as for any other—foolish maiden, I couldn't if I would!"

Love must be inconsistent with the delicacies of diplomacy, for Favre, who had formed a very high estimate of his *protégé's* intelligence, found him singularly dense and unreceptive, and after unfolding various projects that were to render his name immortal, dismissed him with some impatience, informing him that it was his colleague the deputy of war, Gambetta, that wanted to see him. That busy statesman was in the war office in the Rue Dominic—the great palace of the war minister, where in other days only the *élite* of the military hierarchy found reception, and like every thing else curiously changed in aspect under the democratic *régime* of revolution. The wide corridors were crowded with flying figures, the bureaus packed with vociferating officials. Even the "Cabinet" of the ministers was invaded by the Cromwells, guiltless of their country's blood, imploring a hearing for vast projects that were to dissolve the beleaguering hosts of the Germans into thin air.

Trajan recognized only the specter of the leonine orator of the quarter in his old friend, when after infinite delays he penetrated to the desk where Gambetta sat signing papers, listening to reports, deciding questions and dismissing agents, with all the precision and swiftness of a man reared in affairs. He retired with the American to an inner closet, and spoke rapidly. The services Trajan had rendered, and his daring in critical crises, had inspired a wish to have him at Tours, where armies were to be raised. But he didn't dare to risk too many in the balloon. It would be necessary to communicate with Paris from time to time. It was a perilous work, and would become still more dangerous as the German investment drew closer. He had pledged himself that Trajan would act as a confidential messenger to Tours after his, Gambetta's, departure. It might not be for a week, a fortnight, or a month, but he would feel secure if Trajan agreed to undertake the journey! Under such circumstances, though hampered by his promise, Trajan assented, and the next day he was the last that shook the Dic-

tator's hand as the minister stepped into the balloon, to set out on the venturesome voyage over the heads of the enemy to his distant post. Love has a timorous skepticism of its own—for when Trajan returned to the Ardens, an eager face was at the window and a glad voice instead of Pierre's spoke to him at the head of the stairs, and there were little signs and tokens exchanged which indicated that "Somebody" was greatly relieved, though there was nothing said to reveal the doubt that had troubled "Somebody's" little timorous soul during the few hours absence.

During the first six weeks of the siege, that is, till toward the beginning of November, Paris did not present the aspect of a besieged city. The theaters were closed, but the open air concerts were all the more crowded. Gayety, though somewhat subdued, was still the watchword. Food was scarce and not of the luxurious variety for which the Parisian *cuisines* are famed. But life with sunshine and movement and expectation was far from unbearable. Among the well-to-do, there were continuous little *fêtes en famille*, and for the first time in their lives the volatile gadabouts of the richer quarters learned the resources of an interior, for social joys were hitherto exclusively associated with public entertainments. Wine was always abundant; bread, until the last dreadful days of the ordeal, was plenty, and the gourmets realized with wonder how truly the latter was the staff of life. Under such a test the culinary dexterities of the people shone to advantage—never wasteful or lavish, the dinners became marvels of invention. The dearth of vegetables and the scanty nurture of the cattle, however, soon told on the young and infirm. Disease set in with frightful ravages.

The delicately reared were the first to suffer. The physicians called into the field could not attend their patients, and the evils became almost epidemic. Foreigners were naturally the first to suffer, as the drainage and household appliances are in Paris so unlike the cleanly and varied

methods of other countries. Mrs. Arden first, then her sister, were attacked with gastric fever, and the negotiations for the family liberation were as a consequence suspended at the very moment when leave had been granted for the journey of the feminine members of the Ardens to England. Henceforth, the splendid house was transformed into a hospital—for little Amédée, too, was taken ill—Kate, Bella, and Edith each took upon herself an invalid. Straw was laid on the street and on the court-yard, and no one was admitted but the intimate friends of the family.

Theo came daily, but she was out of her element in a scene like this and her visits were not prolonged—to the no small satisfaction of Kate, who grimly commented on this phase of the little diplomate's character. Theo's own cheery apartments in the Rue Galilée became the rendezvous of the colony. When no one else could get eatables or fresh meat, this dauntless little steward managed to set these unexpected dainties on the table at the select little dinners preceding the nightly receptions. It was wickedly said that her brother-in-law's purse was the secret of this amazing abundance, but few who shared in the symposiæ gave much thought to the source of these entertainments, so long as they were invited to the feast. Clare, who had brought her husband home, that she might not be separated from her father, didn't always appear among Theo's guests.

She had lost something of the dreamy listlessness that used to check all approach, and she received the effusive demonstrations of the happy husband with an affectionate patience, that quite won the hearts of the men. The women were greatly mystified by the incongruous couple. It was plain that calculation or mercenary motives had not entered into Clare's conduct, for she was as simple in manner and plain in attire as when Theo's precarious exchequer had been the source of her income. Most of her day was given to her adoring young kinsfolk, Marion and Sophronia—with whom came the pensive Amanda in these times of social eclipse,

when great personages were no more to be captured by the family splendors, in the avenue de Roi de Rome ; nor did Lafayette as Darby lose his relish for the fairy lore that had captured him at Crécy. He had become as much of a child as his small brother, and listened with as much rapturous interest to Crusoe's exploits, or Ali-Baba's misadventures, as the big-eyed boy at full length on the floor, his fat hands supporting his red cheeks and his elbows pillowed on a mat rolled up to soften the resting-place.

To Theo the sight of her big brother-in-law immersed in these revivals of childish romances, inspired a sort of termagant virulence of sarcasm that fairly frightened the light-hearted Benedick. He conceived a mortal dread of her malicious sneer and critical eye, and it was in secret that the conspirators snatched the perfervid joys of romantic and fairy lore. Theo had begun early to insinuate to Clare the necessity of liberal provision for the family. But Mrs. Lafayette had not encouraged the conversation or given any signal of assent. The indifference of Clare arose from an extraordinary circumstance. The Grovel butler was uncle to the Carnot chamber-maid. This girl had been with the family since its first arrival in Paris. Céleste adored Clare, and abhorred Theo. That decisive manager had cut off her perquisites in scores of little ways, perquisites which no French servant pretends to intermit in well-to-do families. Theo had found that the systematic fleecing carried on by the domestics, leagued against the masters, brought food and provisions to ten per cent. higher rates than the ruling prices.

On investigating the matter, she was more amused and enlightened than horrified, for the methods thus discovered enabled her to attain a proficiency in her own subsequent operations, which extracted thousands from her victims, where other and less adroit agents were content with hundreds of dollars. Céleste's kinsman, the Grovel butler, was silent partner with the butcher, baker, coalman, oil man and what not, whose wares enter into household consumption. By certain

masonic symbols, an *entente* was established among the domestics of all stranger families residing in the capital. The cook had her percentage for miss-weighing for the butcher and grocer ; the butler for miss-measuring coal and general supplies ; the chamber-maid for holding her tongue, and the waiters for the same reticence. The Carnots of course never kept a major-domo, but so soon as Theo began to overhaul accounts, she saw the system of leaks that had been wasting the family income. Not a servant under the old *régime* save Céleste was retained. She told her laughingly that henceforth she should have her own and Clare's cast off dresses once a year, a little *fête* present on her birthday, but not a sou's stealage. Céleste turned very red at this ugly word used in the most jocose good humor by the new mistress of the family destiny. She declared that she was an honest girl and that she wouldn't stay where she was suspected of evil doing. She had never been accustomed to such treatment among the *noblesse* where her aptitudes, which were so highly valued, had been learned.

Theo listened to this outbreak with a bland affectation of belief, remarking that honesty after all was a relative sort of question and that Céleste in following the practices of her companions, perhaps did not realize that she was doing wrong. But, she went on, in a tranquil, decisive way that amazed the Frenchwoman : "We can't afford to support the society of cooks and domestics ; we can't afford to pay for a ton of coal when only a half ton is delivered and receipted for ; we can't afford to pay the butcher for twenty-five pounds of meat a week when only ten have been received. In short, Céleste, we are in future going to pay only for what we get, and we are going to measure and weigh every thing ourselves."

Céleste, outraged by such an onslaught, at once sought her kinsman the butler. He was a man of sagacious deliberation, and he counseled the angry Abigail to rest quietly where she was, remarking with the profound insight

that is to be met with in the despots of the servants' hall, when it is notoriously wanting in the drawing-room :

"You must remain with this *roturiere* at least for a time. It won't do to quit the stranger. Such a move would only make tālk, for what happens in one family of Americans is known immediately in others and our society would be weakened by dismissals and dissensions. These Americans for the most part don't object to liberal allowances, in their way, if we are silent. Return to the demoiselle Carnot and quit only when it will *embéte* them to have you leave."

Céleste returned and never made any sign of the hatred she nourished toward the reformer. Indeed, in time it grew into a feeling of something like admiration for Theo's cleverness. A French woman respects the possession of faculty, even though it forces her to extra armaments for the encounter. She kept an eye on Theo, however, and it was partly in spite, partly in admiration, that she one day told Clare that she should give Theo credit for the master-stroke that gained her such a charming *parti* as "Monsieur Grovel."

Clare, very much surprised, asked what she meant. With much laughing and shrugging Céleste told how it was *on dit* that Theo and Jules had arranged the island enterprise, and had isolated the couple by first making way with the boat and then opening the mill gates—that— But, speechless with indignation, Clare ordered the malicious vixen from her sight and sat in a stupor of doubt and terror until Theo, returning from a drive, started as she saw her sister the very picture of the old time when her heart seemed dead.

"Theo ! come here—look me in the eye—tell me—" and Clare rose to transfix the astonished culprit. "Is it true—oh my God ! is it true—did you—did Jules open the gates that hideous night at the Mirabel mill ? I have just heard that you did—don't deceive me."

"What meddler has come to you with such a farrago ? I'm

astonished, Clare, that you can be tormented by such twaddle."

"Is it, or is it not true—look me in the face—tell me? I won't be played with, I won't give way to you in this. You may play with men's hearts and your own honor, you shall not play with mine."

"What do you mean, Clare. Even if Jules and I did play the trick, what harm was there in it? You have the most devoted husband in the world, and any one can see that you love him, I am——"

"That's enough, Theo, I am answered. Oh, Theo, Theo, thank God, your infamy did not ruin the life of a kind and tender soul." She drew back shuddering as Theo made a movement to touch her. "Oh—no—no—I can't just yet. You are terrible, Theo—you make me thrill with horror, when I think that you are my sister and with so fair a face and so young—so depraved and heartless——"

"But I haven't said I sent the boat away, or cut the chain of the mill gates—you've only the gossip of some simpleton——"

"Oh, Theo! Theo! you are a wicked girl; you have not denied it, you can not deny it; an honest woman would faint under the very suspicion, and you—you—Theo, your eyes laughed when I asked you, hoping against hope that it was a calumny and that, heartless, mercenary, absorbed as you have grown for money, you still retained natural feelings for me, your sister, and the sentiment of honor that should mark our family."

Clare walked the room in agitation. Theo sank upon a chintz covered sofa, burying her face in the fluffy folds of its pillows. "Oh, my God, my God, that my own sister—that the child grown up like my very own, should consent to such atrocious, such heartless, such vile complotting. You will say that it was for my sake you did the villainy. That this rich man was too valuable a prey to pass by; that by fair means I could never have been brought to consent."

She stopped, and looking at the crouching figure, continued :

"Ah, Theo, Theo, you have gone far from me. You have set up an altar whose worship I do not understand ; whose very accents are unknown to me. Where did you get such views of life? You never learned them from me. For God knows that even in my days of dreams and ambition I thought only of rank and love, never of the sordid realities of money ! "

Theo, with white face and eyes that glittered under a humid veil, said, in a cold, hard voice :

"I came by my traits legitimately—look at our kinswoman, La Baronne. If I'm a reprobate it was you that made me so ; it was you——"

"I—I—" gasped Clare, sinking in a chair.

"Yes, it was the sight of you that day in the old home and every day thereafter for years, that made me meditate by day and dream by night of revenge on that coward Kent and his arrogant mother. It was your mute plea for redress, your folded hands, clasped in passive protest ; your wrecked life and helpless drift into moral Nihilism, that filled me, since I can remember, with one purpose, an equality in all that the world holds in awe with the Ardens. Wicked I may be, and dead to the nicer refinements that guide girls reared in the serener grades of life—but you are the last one to accuse me of heartlessness. Tell me a time since childhood that your will hasn't been my law ; that your needs haven't been studied before any body's else, that every disturbing influence, every hateful thing in the cares of the day have not been kept from you——"

"Ah—Theo, child—all this makes the matter worse. There's no wickedness so baleful as that to which one gives some sort of a color of righteousness. My child, forego all these useless dreams. We are now secure from want. Come to the mountains. Live with us ; get out of this dreadful fever of Paris. These odious men that visit us are intoler-

able to me. Lafayette tells me that this Prince d'Amboise is little better than a murderer; he broke the heart of a noble woman and deserted her—a maniac. They are all alike, Theo. It is mingling with them that dissipates your conscience and makes it impossible for you to see the horror of the position you have placed me in."

"What have you to do with your position? Even supposing that the ruse was played in a spirit of fun—you had no knowledge of it; not a soul knew it. The miller was drunk, and as for any human handiwork, it is only wild conjecture."

"I have this much to do with the scandal, Theo, that I shall instantly tell the facts to my husband. I can not afford to let this stain rest upon my honor as his wife. I must have his respect, as I give him mine. How could I expect it if he identified me with an ignoble, shameless plot to entrap him into marriage?"

"But he would have married you in any event."

"No, he would never have married me if the—that—terrible incident had not compelled it. I did not deceive him. He knows that he is not loved. But his sense of honor and my fear of ruining your prospects, induced me to accept marriage as the only way out of the miserable complication. He would never have married me, for I should never have consented! It is not your fault that two lives have not been made bitter and wretched. His unsuspicious, happy nature makes my task easy; but what do you suppose would be the result of such a revelation as this to him from any one else than myself? He is uneducated and rash. His faculties when trained are admirable, but he could never reason out my innocence in this vile intrigue. It humiliates me to be forced to put my sister in such an attitude, but his happiness is in my care and I must protect it by arming him with the truth."

Theo meanwhile had arisen and was pacing the floor, her two hands clasped on the back of her head, the elbows pro-

truding akimbo. Without stopping in the walk, which grew more nervous, as she gave herself up to the passionate thought which, her eyes told, was shaping itself in her brain, she asked almost indifferently, "Where did you hear this farrago, Clare?"

"Céleste heard it in the butler's hall at the Grovels."

"Well, if you are determined to govern yourself by the appreciations of the servants' hall, all I can say is that Jules and myself will oppose a positive denial to this preposterous story. We can prove that we were both at the Duclos Château when you and Lafayette rode out, and that your disappearance was as great a shock to us as to the rest. I will furthermore dismiss Céleste for this impertinence, and I shall myself go to your father-in-law, relate this whole revolting business, and ask him to dismiss the servants that have set such stories on foot," and so from the nettle danger Theo set forth to pluck not only the flower safety, but a sort of moral Coronal. When she told Lafayette the story, in her own vivacious way, her eyes dim with tears and her pretty hand busy with the lace that repressed, while it did not hide, the pearly drops, that good natured prince of the prairie roared with laughter.

"'Pon my soul, Theo, I wish you had done it three weeks sooner, I would have been that much ahead in happiness."

"But don't I tell you—it's a calumny, Lafayette, and you must not let it be said."

"All right, Theo dear, you're a brick—I beg pardon, I mean you're, you're a gold lode—that's it—I don't care a red pippin how Clare and I became one. I'm the happiest Jake in creation, and so long as Clare don't mind, why let 'em say what they please." But there was dismay in the butler's domain that same day.

CHAPTER XXXI.

JULES GOES OUT TO SHEAR AND IS SHORN.

CLARE'S words had sunk far deeper into the sober sense of her sister than either of them realized at the time. There was a look of haggard care on the small piquant face, giving it the appearance of an unseemly mask, as Theo locked herself in her room after the confession to Lafayette. Never since she could remember had her elder sister spoken in such a tone. Until her own better capacity for managing had put her at the head of the household, Clare had been a mother as well as sister to Jules and Theo.

Though the disparity in years was but slight, Clare's brooding life had given her a sobriety that seemed proper to an older person. It was partly this appearance of age, or at any rate the gravity of age, if not years, as well as the difference in natures, that left both girls in almost complete ignorance of the nature of each other. Clare never dreamed that she did not know Theo, profoundly, to the utmost convolution of her brain tissue. Theo, while not so certain of the extent of her knowledge of her sister, let no speculation go astray, up to a certain point. There had been few secrets between them. There were the reserves that must always subsist between natures that are in the slightest degree dissimilar. Clare, mother-like, was confident she knew the nature of her sister, whereas it was as impenetrable to her as the dialect of the lost tribes. As it is a false key that opens all doors, so it is a false nature which, suspecting others, is keenest and surest in measuring the false in others.

While Theo was a dead secret to her sister, Clare's heart was an open tablet, or she thought it was. Now, though familiarly confiding with her elder, Theo always held back the strong impulses and coloring processes of her life. She vaguely imagined that Clare was in cordial sympathy with

her; that speech was not essential in all things. If she had even asked herself the question why Clare left the schemes and battle of life to her junior, Theo would have answered it with entirely just complacency, that it was her superior fitness for the post that gave her the sword and shield.

In the scheme of her life it was Jules' future and Clare's ease she had most at heart. The Grovel marriage was to make Jules potential—to gain him Bella.

In pushing Clare into marriage with Grovel, Theo believed herself to be doing not only a master-stroke in social diplomacy, but by breaking in upon the inertia of the melancholy dreamer had forced her into a new life which would restore her to her ancient spirit and gayety. Her amazement was not less than her despair, when Clare denounced the plot of which she and Grovel had been made the victims. She had never thought it necessary to make known to Clare that a union with Yahoo Gulch would be a great step toward the re-establishment of the family fortunes. Had she done so Clare would have fled in consternation; but now that the battle had been set, and the adversary squarely beaten, why should she be set upon as a Sycorax, peopling the family halls with monsters! There are few of us who can resist a gentle filmy sort of hypocrisy with ourselves. Debating the purposes agitating her breast, Theo felt convinced that her conduct, instead of denunciation or disparagement, was deserving of warm praise. Had she not for the sake of her family sacrificed her heart, in refusing the man she loved; the only man she should ever love? What! wicked to put the cup from her lips and take hyssop and hemlock? What! she, with her mind alive to all the amenities of seclusion, and her soul responsive to love, denying herself all this for the reconquest of the family glory, reviled as wicked, unprincipled, debased, almost vile? She clenched her hand so fiercely upon her bosom that a stray pin struck to the bone. She hardly felt it until a little purple spray of blood oozing out trickled softly down upon her face as she clasped

her hands above her forehead, a favorite trick with Theo in excitement. She caught sight of the wound in the mirror before she felt it, and arose with a faint scream to wash it away; for, like most strong natures, Theo became faint at sight of blood.

Before she reached the basin in the dressing-room a loud knock, which she recognized as Jules', startled her. He was hardly less startled when he saw her gory face. As she explained the cause he fell into a chair with a heavy sigh. She came back to the dresser, anointed the finger, and conjured the vision of blood by a dab of rice powder. She came softly behind Jules and putting her two hands under his chin drew his handsome head back, planting a tender lingering kiss on the forehead, the eyelids, and then with a most passionate accession of love, full upon the shapely mouth.

"You are unhappy, Jules. Tell me, what is it—money? You've not been gaming again—you promised me, you know—you must postpone luxuries like that until you have a bank account."

"No—damnation. Theo don't always harp on that devilish theme. Oh, God eternal and omnipotent, would that such hateful stuff as gold never had been invented. What is it? why seek it? why better with than without it? why should I, who know more than half the infernal young noodles of the Faubourg, lie and cringe and sneak, to conceal my empty purse? Why should I plot and scheme, and let you plot and scheme, for what? To have what can't give our new relations, the Grovels, the respect of the most beggarly patrician in the Faubourg. Our brother-in-law, Lafayette, is worth five millions it is said. He couldn't enter as a lackey where I go as a welcome guest. 'Pon my faith, Theo, I think I could be an honest fellow. I think I could be with the woman I love. Oh, Theo!"

She had gently pushed him back upon the sofa, and kneeling on the floor looked into his eyes. He bent down blushing and kissed her.

"Did you think I didn't know it, dear. I don't blame you. You love her and she shall love you."

"Oh, Theo, I can't understand it. When she looks at me I have no speech; when I am near her my whole body is in a tremble; I dare not breathe sometimes. I thought it such an easy thing to make the test of winning her. I didn't much care, but thought it would help your plans. My God, my God, Theo, all the devil in me is evaporated, I have no daring; all my old ambitions seem degrading and shallow; if she looks at flower or leaf, or twig or bough, in the bois, I can't sleep until I have gone those weary miles to get them at the risk of arrest by the gendarmes. If she passes an urchin on the street and pats his head, I find myself moping there afterward just to see the happy brat again. The jockeys in the stables think me an imbecile for caressing her beast. Oh, Theo, Theo, you have lost an ally—you have lost a brother: what she loves I love; what she wishes I wish; what she commands I will do, or die in doing."

"I am told she loves the prince—do you love him?"

"Tush, she doesn't care that for the prince," and Jules snapped his finger lightly.

"Does she care for you?"

Jules rose and walked to the window and answered in a low sad tone:

"No; she is in love with Gray, and Gray doesn't know it"

Theo was at his side in a flash. Thrusting herself between him and the window, she searched his face with wild startled eyes:

"Gray, did you say—Gray, Jules? You don't mean it," she asked.

"Yes," Jules answered. "I know the light that comes in her eye when Gray is near; I know the signs, I suffer them every hour in the day; I sometimes think they are with me in my sleep. Oh, Theo, Theo, you are so clever.

Give me this; make this sweet girl love me. But what a simpleton I am. I know from what I feel myself, that this can not be. I am a fool, and no wonder I am talking like one. But I have got so used to looking to a thing as done when you promise it, that I came over here eager and sanguine, as I used to when I had sacked my month's supplies and came to you knowing that you had a wizard rod to transmute my I. O. U.'s into Napoleons."

Theo, seating herself, motioned Jules to sit also. She put her hands up, clasping them behind her head, and studied the young man with a dreamy sort of abstraction.

"You feel confident Bella has idealized Trajan into a lover?"

"Oh, no, no! I didn't say that. Trajan is passionately attached to Edith, and doesn't dream of Bella's preference."

"You think Trajan really cares for Edith?" Theo asked, taking down her hands suddenly.

"Think; why it's plain enough—haven't you seen it? The very servants treat him as a *fiancé*."

"I thought he was fond of her; but I am sure he does not love her, on the very same ground sthat you claim that Bella's love could never come to you."

"What in Heaven's name do you mean, Theo? I don't understand you; but I believe that you think you can gain me this salvation."

"If you tell me truly that Bella loves Trajan Gray, I will stake my head that you have the promise of her hand in marriage before the spring buds bloom in the Champs Élysées."

"Theo, you are a witch, your guiles are infinite, your address something diabolic, but, my child, your love for me blinds you here. It's only in romance that devoted sisters and pious mothers win rich and obdurate maidens to love repentant and plausible young men. I know you're capable of a good deal. I'm not sure," he added, looking at her strangely, "that you would hesitate at the Italian arts"—she

started—" and I declare I shall warn Gray to look out for his liquors when you are about, for I know you well enough to know that whatever stands in my way you will remove, if it takes dynamite or Prussic acid to do it! But it's of no use, Theo, I own that for the moment I am completely useless. I have drifted as completely from the objects, aspirations and purposes of the last few years as though I had been landed in the Happy Valley and the indolence of rest had taken possession of me. The lotos eater's song is in my brain, the poppies of Cathay in my blood. I am for the moment made as pure and innocent, by love, as a saint by religion. The merest rope of sand, spun from a melting beach, holds me to the life you have taught me was to be mine. If you want to get me back, you'll have to forge a chain of love."

"Well, I'll be Azrael to one at least of these lovers. Foolish boy; keep your counsel. Be all things to all the moods of this proud beauty. Melt her heart by timid obeisance, but if you could seize some opportunity for a daring rescue—if it were only a dog—it would thrill her. I've caught her crying like a watering trough over such flimsy stuff as that Tulliver girl in 'The Mill on the Floss.' You'll have no difficulty in replacing Gray—if he be her hero—for she was won to him by that gratuitous piece of blood and thunder I always suspected he invented for his own purposes."

"But how account for his late exploits—at Metz and Sédan?"

"I don't deny he's brave"—and there was a peculiar light in Theo's eyes—"but even a hero is justified in setting his scene to show his parts to the best advantage. Depend upon it, Bella's airy fancies have given Trajan's valor a local habitation. Let her once be rid of her regard for him—do you think you could win her?"

"I'm sure of it."

"*Très bien*, give me six weeks and I'll engage that

Trajan Gray is not on speaking terms with a single member of the Arden family."

"What in God's name do you mean?"

"You have just told me that you are held to the past by a rope of rainbow texture. I can't trust you; therefore, all you have to consider is the question of entering a breach, when another arm has battered the guns away."

Can it be that those merry jokers, the scientists, who are gradually clearing away all the baggage of romance and the masks of history, can it be that they tell us truly in those wonderful chapters on air-waves and spiritual interpenetration—magnetic and otherwise? I am not superstitious; I never knew a seventh son of a seventh son who could see further through a stone wall than a third or a second, but I am forced to record a curious coincidence, for as sure as you, reader, are wise and learned (and you can't contain all that is in this history without being that), acute, critical and far-seeing, it was during this very time that Trajan, seated in the Arden drawing-room, intent upon a visual acquaintance with the blue deeps in "Somebody's" eyes, felt a strange sinking sensation and a sudden clamor of dread, as you may have felt in your younger years on suddenly looking over your left shoulder and seeing the new moon, in the days before you had delivered yourself from this old grandam fable! His spirit darkened suddenly, unaccountably; all the rest of the day he remained in depression that deepened to gloom. The shadow of a presentiment, vague, flitting, intangible, hung over him, until the kindly conjurer, sleep, exorcised the spirit of dread in the nepenthe of dreams.

Jules left his sister frightened rather than comforted. He had no doubt of Theo's inexpugnable purpose. Her inscrutable methods, too, did much to awe the young man. He admired her cleverness, her matchless faculty for seizing and adjusting things to suit her purposes. But what did she mean to do to alienate the Ardens from Trajan, who

was regarded as a sort of demi-god by the four women? He couldn't imagine what Theo relied on so confidently; that she was confident her calmness and conviction left no room to doubt. Whatever was to be done, he resolved to take no part in the plot, open or ulterior. He knew that if he were ever to gain Bella's confidence, it must be by an open deportment and the observance of the things that men of honor hold absolute. He was not in any sense converted or contrite; far from it. Conviction of any kind made but light hold on Jules' volatile consciousness. For the moment the aristocratic pose and stately beauty of Bella seemed more desirable than the court dames and rank he had made the crown of his destiny. The court dames and titles would have required another form of wooing. He would have adopted the lighter and more congenial form with greater readiness. Jules was a fellow of bright wit. He was Theo's counterpart in repartée, and he was adored by the fragile beauties of the court and *coulisses.*

But what could Theo mean by assuring Jules of the exile of Trajan from the friends that adored him? My own impression is that she counted at first on recapturing Trajan, by arts that she alone knew how to employ! By such a stroke she would destroy the fabric of Trajan's credit with all the Ardens. He would be odious to Edith for his infidelity; hateful to Elliot for his interference in that young man's passing whim, and antipathetic to Mrs. Arden, her sister and Bella because of his inconstancy, instability and faithlessness. Now to have done this, would have been a masterpiece of plotting. It would have been the dramatic and emotionally stimulating device to adopt, were this merely a romance invented for the puzzlement of the reader.

To have Theo bring Trajan back to her feet by the most charming confession of her baseness, her vow of repentance and dedication to the beatitudes, would be one of the most striking situations in fiction. It would be a peculiarly felicitous means of rehabilitating Theo in the character of a

heroine, and give her what her cleverness demands, the first place in these pages—for such is the depravity of the race, that those who have gone over these pages admire the wicked Delilah—preferring her with all her works and pomps, to the magnificent Bella and the sweet nymph Edith. I own 'twould be an edifying tableau to close the volume with, the repentant Theo in tears at Trajan's feet, begging for the love she had scorned, the heart she had broken. But the energetic Theo had no such project of moral rehabilitation in her mind. Her plans for carrying out her purpose were of a sort more in keeping with the audacity of her nature and the originality of her methods. Hence the reader will bear in mind that the neglect of this opportunity for a dazzling stroke of dramatic poetic justice is no more the writer's fault than the events that led to Iphigenia's unpleasant dilemma, or Briseis' wretched fate, were ascribable to Homer.

We know Theo well enough to take her word for it, that what she promises Jules she means to carry out. How then is she to bring this catastrophe to pass? She spoke with such confidence when she looked Jules in the eye, that he knew she had something to base it on. Possibly Trajan might have heard the threat with scorn. What, the blue eyes, into whose deeps he never tired gazing, turned from him? what, his body still red with scars suffered defending Arden lives, looked upon coldly by the tender ladies, who had taken him to their hearts? Trajan would have laughed at such a comic suggestion. The Ardens were made of metal not so easily molded.

Theo, meanwhile, had not forgotten Céleste's offense. She had never deceived herself as to that young person's sullen dislike to the new *régime* in the Rue Galilée. Interest alone had kept her in the family. Clare was very gentle and kind with her, and Theo was so much away in the grand world, that the girl rather regarded herself as mistress. Good fortune too, had somewhat relaxed Theo's watchful-

ness, and Céleste found many a chance to pocket a passing penny. When, therefore, one day she was summoned to her mistress late in the afternoon, and was informed that her month's wages were ready and she should quit the house on the instant, there was a scene almost as affecting as that which we read of when the king dismisses a prime minister. Céleste implored pardon ; she would be the slave, the angel of the household—if she might be spared this *escalandre.* Theo was obdurate. She was smiling the while—but as firm as flint. Céleste got up from the floor where she had fallen in piteous abasement, and there was a strange gleam in her eye as she asked submissively if mademoiselle would give her commendation in her *carnet,* that she might get another post.*

No, the indignant mistress could not take it upon her conscience to introduce so faithless a servant into an honest family. All that she could promise was to say nothing unless compelled. I think that if Theo could have seen the face of the dismissed and disgraced maid as she stole out a half hour later, she would have overlooked the babbling that had aroused Clare to protest. For as she closed the door leading to the *escalier de service,* she left her packages on the floor long enough to shake her fist menacingly toward Theo's room, whispering between her lips : " You shall go down on your knees to get me back, and even then, perhaps, I sha'n't come." But who ever saw a dismissed aid in any of the industries of life, from a *congéd* premier to an expropriated cook, who didn't take themselves off breathing rage and filled with dire foretellings ?

* *Carnet* is a small memorandum book that French servants are compelled by law to deposit at the police bureau for the inspection of those who hire them.

CHAPTER XXXII.

LIKE A TALE THAT IS TOLD.

EXILED in London, Elliot hungered for the friends on the Seine, little imagining the stress in which his family were placed. His mind was, it must be owned, more occupied with dreams of Theo than the group on the Rue François I. He passed much of his time with Armitage, whom he had known in Paris, and that amiable Briton diverted him a good deal. His home letters were rare and brief, as communication could only be carried on in the diplomatic mail-bag and this was heavily burdened.

Theo sent him infinitely amusing accounts of life during the siege. Of the shift for food. How she went to market daily in a disguise which left her a cross between the fairy godmother and Cinderella; how it required profound skill in animal anatomy to say whether she was paying three dollars a pound for rabbit or cat meat, but that to the taste both were one; how that on the altar of starvation all viands gave the same odor and took the same taste. She kept him *au courant* of her triumphs in the Faubourg, describing with enchanting drollery the forays of the dowagers upon the young men she had accepted as her body guard, so to speak. She recalled just enough coquetry and naïve disregard of his own pretension to madden the otherwise equable lover with outbreaks of passionate rage and despair.

"The infernal little flirt—was there ever such a shamelessly unprincipled minx—absolutely calling me in to witness her artifices, as though, having baited me, there is no further need of wasting her deceptions on me."

The aftermath of his wayward passion was a long dissipation in the roystering life of the London clubs, where his relationship to a family of high rank gave him great vogue. He met Armitage often, and during the expansions of club

revelry he learned of Theo's meeting with Trajan and her identification with the smugglers. The dismal story, added to a winter of dissipation, threw him into a mental breakdown, which in the end became a physical collapse.

The weeks of fever that followed his Sardanapalian excesses and repentance were kept from the mother and sister, though Armitage wrote Trajan, leaving it to his discretion whether to make known the danger or not. Instead of doing this Trajan confided the bad news to Kate, and it was agreed that she should go over to London on a plausible pretext, to nurse the lad to convalescence before any hint of his true condition should reach the household. The home invalids were recovering slowly and the shock of Elliot's danger might bring on a relapse.

It thus happened that Kate found herself installed in the pretty villa at Denmark Hill, where Armitage had conveyed the reprobate, so soon as the physician pronounced his illness serious. Kate wrote letters of buoyant flippancy to the anxious friends in Paris, intrepidly representing that the lad had broken his leg, which was mending slowly ; or that he had suffered a relapse, through risking his limb in the street. Indeed, Kate for a month demonstrated capacities in circumstantial fiction that would have made her invaluable in politics or journalism !

Elliot's system, though shaken, was unimpaired, and Kate's assiduous nursing finally routed the beleaguering ills that assailed the hapless exile. When the sharp east winds came whistling through the wide reaches of Denmark Hill, lifting the fogs that smother the London end of the British isles, he was able to be up and breathe a new breath of life. He was still languid and inert, but with the spring sunshine began to recover his fine color and the roseate tinge that served as a barometer to the healthfulness of his blood. He had gone through an ordeal hardly less painful than bitter. In the delirious wanderings of his first ten days' fever Kate had been appalled by the glimpses she gathered of the lad's mis-

erable follies. She saw, almost to the last detail, the mental and moral maelstrom through which his heart and conscience had been swirled in the reaction brought about by the discovery of Theo's systematic perfidy. But when he came to himself she gave no signs of the secrets divulged in his wanderings. When the lad's astonished eyes rested on her in his first moments of consciousness, she remarked blandly that he had been like a log during her nursing. He recovered his sane faculties slowly, and had no notion of the crisis through which he had passed.

Armitage had been constant and devoted during his friend's illness. He resented the spinster's intrusion and attempted to debar her the dangerous post of nurse during the compromising outbursts of fever. But the Scot had held her own grimly, and when the final struggle came, routed the enemy with such decisive vigor that he made the story the capsheaf of his grist when particularly expansive with his cronies.

"An' de ye think I'll leave my bairn to your clumsy doits whan ye've fetched him to this pass?" she asked with indignant scorn as she confronted him when the struggle came; "after yer leadin' him into all his diviltries; tush, mon; ye need na glower on me at all, I'm no afeard of the likes of ye, for a' yer flesh and brawn," and she retired, closing the door in the discomfited champion's face, and would only let him come to the ante-chamber until the danger was over. Elliot, either by a dim association of ideas, or a hint from Armitage, became conscious of his old friend's knowledge of his woeful story—the extent of his miserable and mad excesses. The sense of it filled him with a new agony. Shame was added to remorse, and for the first time in his life he was ashamed to look any one in the face. She instantly detected the change from his old-fashioned frank way, and she was cruelly hurt by it.

She yearned to have the hateful shadow exorcised, but she would have been torn by wild horses sooner than pain him

by first alluding to it. One day, however, letters from his mother, Edith and Bella, let loose the fountains of the culprit's heart. He felt miserably guilty and unworthy as the sacred confidences of his kin fell like mingled balm and gall upon his conscience. In an irrepressible burst of anguish he poured out the wretched story of his weakness and wickedness in the ears of the sobbing spinster. She soothed him, but did not dwell on it, or make light of it. The lesson had been bitter, she thought to herself cautiously, and she would not impair its effects by weak extenuation. She soothed him as she had seen his mother many a time when he was a "wee bairn" snuggling at her knees in his boyish troubles. She could not, however, forbear to remind him of the baleful influences of an unholy passion, and though she didn't mention Theo's name, he understood her. But he colored at the allusion and became silent. Kate was too keen an observer and too familiar with young people to mistake from the first the nature of Elliot's infatuation for Theo.

She knew that there was none of the sanctity of hallowed love in it; none of the impulse that binds hearts, as well as hands, in a wholesome and purifying union. But she felt that some of the danger was past and she left him to meditate, fearing that her zeal might lead her to say something that would arrest the current of repentance and bring about a reaction. The invalid continued to improve and the physicians promised that he might set out in safety to join his family within a week, when the morning after brought a mandate he regarded as more imperative. With letters from the family came a note in an unknown hand:

"If Monsieur Arden wishes to rescue his sister from an adventurer and libertine, he will instantly return to Paris, and by inquiring for Madelaine Tarbes, No. 70 Rue des Blancs Manteaux, he will learn what this word of warning means."

There was no signature—nothing to indicate the source,

but Elliot instantly resolved that he would heed it. The protests of the medical men fell on obdurate ears. Kate did not attempt to dissuade him. He did not confide the anonymous message to her, and she had painful misgivings that Jezebel was at the bottom of the mystery whatever it was. They were to set out by the tidal train, by Dover and Calais, at seven o'clock. All the afternoon Kate was in town, and when she returned there was an expression of satisfaction on her face which indicated some decisive measure taken greatly comforting to her. It was now possible to return to Paris, as the armistice made the city free to all who had business and could show need of entrance.

As the family sat at the breakfast table the next noon, the wanderer walked in quite as though he had not missed the reunion a day. Edith saw him first and rose with a little scream of joy. The subsequent tableau, every body familiar with the story of the prodigal and the foolish emotional nature of mothers and sisters can imagine much better than a grave historical pen can waste time in describing. There was fully an hour of the most absurd and disjointed narrative, begun at one end of the table, taken up in the middle, and hopelessly muddled at the other end. Then questions answered by others, and such a medley that Kate declared it was enough to drive the lad back into fever.

"Fever! why what do you mean, Kate? Has Elliot been in fever?"

"Well, as you may say," stammered the luckless culprit, "a fever of impatience, you know."

But the keen mother's eye was not to be deceived. She did not suspect the truth, but she knew that her darling had been dangerously ill, and she looked reproachfully at Kate, as any fond mother would do, for depriving her of the right to nurse him back to life.

I am confident that he looked ill enough to justify her in putting him to bed, that she might have the joy of ministering to him. He laughed the suggestion to scorn; he had

scores of things to do, and after a day's rest he would begin in the morning. His arm was around Edith's waist as he spoke and he wondered what devouring monster it was that threatened the perils at which his anonymous informer hinted. He felt measurably easy in his mind so long as he was near the little maiden, and astonished that young person very much by the uneasiness he manifested whenever she quit his sight for a moment. The Prince d'Amboise and Jules were, he learned, the only gentlemen visiting the house regularly.

Philip, engaged on his staff duties, was at Versailles, and Elliot was lost in wonder over the probable wolf sharpening his teeth for the victim.

The incoherent retrospect, a mosaic of Bella's, Edith's and his mother's reminiscences, since the disastrous night at Crécy was still in the most inextricable confusion, when Theo and Jules were announced. Kate almost fell on her knees in devout delight when Elliot, with a shade of annoyance, asked his mother to make his excuses. He was not equal to seeing any one, and forthwith stretched himself on the sofa with an air of invalid-like exhaustion that threw Kate into a spasm of badly-contained hilarity. Edith looked on her with large eyes of solemn reproach at such unseemly and unfeeling levity, and refused to be placated when the penitent came up and put her arms around her indignant neck. The call was very short. So soon as Elliot's arrival and fatigue were made known, Theo arose, saying:

"I know you grudge every instant, and I shall not let myself be associated in your mind with such a deprivation. Come, Jules; a house of joy, like a house of mourning, is no place for the stranger. We shall hope to see Elliot entirely restored to-morrow."

Mrs. Arden, touched by the girl's thoughtfulness, kissed her affectionately as she passed out, and Jules, stealing a rueful glance at Bella, followed her with a reluctance that left a gentle pang, not altogether devoid of pleasure, in that

price, in order that a monarch of the House of Orleans or Bourbon might set up a throne under the protection of Bismarck's venal bayonets. "The worst of it," Philip continued, "is, that Gambetta, who alone has influence with the better class and the thinking groups of irreconcilables, has been snubbed and vilified by Thiers and his familiars, and holds aloof from all parties. His presence in Paris at this hour would insure peaceful methods on the part of the revolutionists; for they know, however much they may resent his conservatism, that he is loyally democratic. I am greatly in hopes that Trajan, who has the commission of the old Radical guard, will prevail upon the Dictator to come back; for, unless he does, the folly of the Monarchists and the passion of the mob will bring about a collision. If Aunt Cordelia were able to bear the journey, I should advise quitting Paris for the present."

"But she is not in condition to be moved, and the physicians give no hopes of it under a month, if then," said Elliot, in an undertone.

"The best thing to be done, then, is to move out as little as may be in the streets, and wait until the municipal government is rescued from the domination of these turbulent National Guards."

When Elliot, a few days later, visited the address given in the anonymous letter, he was met with ingratiating deference by the duenna Madelaine Tarbes who held the clue to Trajan's alleged transgressions. A tale of Trajan's turpitude was told him by this artless old lady that fairly froze the genial current of Elliot's liberal soul. It was set forth with a minute circumstantiality that left no hope of mistaken identity possible; and Elliot returned with a new burden upon him. Trajan must be denied the household, and Edith must be rescued from the hideous pitfall opening before her innocent steps. The extraordinary story he had heard bewildered him. It was unlike any conduct of which he believed Trajan capable. He would have dis-

credited it with contempt, had it not been that the boy Amédée was with Trajan. He had seen him and had marked Trajan's confusion when the little fellow came into the studio on that May day long ago, when he visited him for the first time. He would not, however, wholly condemn him until he had verified every detail. But until the question was resolved it was plain that Edith should be kept from companionship with her lover. This seemed to him a duty. He was sadly perplexed about its performance.

His sober face was a signal for a chorus of questions from the domestic circle so soon as he appeared, but he evaded all the hints directed at him and plunged into the commonplaces of the day. His preoccupation was too transparent to deceive any of the wondering group, and the company fell into silence, broken at last by Pierre's entrance to announce Jules. It was nearly the dinner hour when the visitor arose to go, but being urged to remain, he consented with very evident pleasure. The young men having gone into Elliot's dressing-room to prepare for the table, he led the conversation to Trajan without apparent design, and learned that he was expected in Paris the next day from St. Sebastian, where he had left Gambetta, unable to persuade him to come back to Paris.

"By the way, speaking of Gray, how long have you known him!"

"I have known of him any time for the last seven years, I think, but I met him first about two years ago."

As these dates didn't cover the event upon which Elliot was seeking light, he dismissed the topic by saying carelessly:

"He has certainly become wonderfully identified with men and parties in so short a time."

"Yes; if Gray were a Frenchman he could be minister before ten years are over," assented Jules.

Elliot read confirmation of Jules' news of Trajan's expected return in Edith's eyes as she came to the table,

at which Elliot was strangely silent and gloomy, affecting every one by this unwonted humor. It was a relief when the meal came to an end and Elliot, alleging business at the Embassy, went out for the evening. He set off toward the Champs Élysée, which still bore traces of the winter's siege. Though it was late in March, the gardens, usually lighted, were dark and gloomy, and the few gas jets gave but a pale glimmer of the old-time radiance of this broad way of light and life. His mind was working in a violent turmoil. A mad desire to see and speak with Theo, whom, on one pretext or another, he had avoided since his return, possessed him now that he knew she had been wronged by the aspersions of Trajan. He had resolved to renounce her fatal charms in the fervor of repentance that followed his recovery, when he thought her an ignoble adventuress, playing with honest love while seeking riches and station only.

Did he not owe her amends for his treason! Had he not blindly believed in her guilt, without giving her a chance to deny or disprove? Didn't the revelations of Madam Tarbes carry out her defiance to Trajan in the summer-house? Had she not shown angelic magnanimity in refusing to expose and discredit her maligner under a cruel provocation? What must she think of his baseness in holding her at arm's length since his return? He resolved instantly to make amends. In a moment he was in a cab rolling toward the Arch. As he turned into the Rue Galilée, the Carnot apartments were a blaze of light. Could it be a *fête*? Never mind, his repentance would make him welcome. As he reached the top of the last flight of stairs, a maid passed him swiftly with something in her hands. He found the door open, but punctiliously rang the bell. He waited, but no one came to answer.

Entering the vestibule, he spied Marion Grovel tumbling a cat at the end of the passage-way. Calling the boy, he asked if Theo was at home. Yes, she was in the *salon*—"Walk right in," and the boy pulled back the *por-*

tière, with his back to the interior. The door was ajar, and near the mantel, laden with rare flowers, Elliot's transfixed glance saw this spectacle: the Prince d'Amboise, with his arms around Theo's waist, looking down into her eyes, which could be seen in the mirror upturned to his, flaming in passionate response to those above her. As Elliot started in amazement, the prince bent and planted his mouth full upon the pouting lips. Marion, wondering at the visitor's stare, dropped the curtain as the cat, trying to evade him, made a dash to enter. He followed it into the room, and Elliot could hear him through the drapery—

"Aunt Theo, Mr. Arden wants to see you."

"Where is he?" It was Theo's voice.

"At the door; I opened it for him, but he won't come in. He wants you to ask him most likely."

In a moment the door was swung back, the curtain raised and Theo, flushed and enchanting, stood under the half lifted curtain.

Elliot had moved back to the hat rack, and, reassured by this, she came forward, holding out both hands. Elliot would have been unable to conceal his knowledge of the scene in the *salon* if the maid had not entered the vestibule door at the moment. He took one hand decorously, but made no response to the ardent pressure of the unabashed witch.

"So you have remembered the old love at last?" she said, in tender reproach.

"But I'm in time before you're on with the new?"

"I have a great mind to make you do penance for your shameless neglect."

"I have already done penance; it is absolution I need now."

"Ah—I shall prescribe conditions first."

"The conqueror it is who imposes terms?"

"Then prepare for Prussian exactions; but come, there is an old friend in the *salon*—guess who?"

"If the empire were not abolished I should say Napoléon —as the empire is gone, perhaps Gambetta."

"You saucy fellow; my king is not of that sort," and she threw a bewildering glance from the flashing, parti-colored eyes.

"Monsieur d'Amboise," she continued, "here is the heroic exile, returned from the Valley of Death."

"A thousand welcomes, then, Monsieur Arden; alas, the Valley of Death—it is Paris, in the hands of the vile Prussians," said the prince, as he held out both hands with the fervor of his race.

Elliot was afraid he was going to add the kiss with which that demonstrative race mark their cordiality, and kept his arms quite rigid, as a barrier against this embarrassing token.

"Ah, *cher Monsieur*, we have not met since the great *malheur*. I have never smiled since Sédan—I assure you—my heart is buried with the glories of France. The world has lost all charms for me," and the hapless patriot clasped his hands, while his loyal bosom burst with a profound sigh.

"But there ought to be charms left in a world like this, filled with adorable consolers, whose eyes and lips should make a man see roses on the gates of Hades," and Elliot glanced gallantly at Theo, who blushed in the demurest way imaginable, as the innocent Chloe when Philander becomes too ardent in the Sylvan groves.

"Ah, *cher Monsieur*, but you others—you can not understand the love a Frenchman bears the *patrie*. Other people are the citizens of a country, we are the children of the *patrie*. Read our ballads, read our legends, it is as a fond mother, a mistress, that France is idealized and adored. Her sons decorate her with the garlands of glory and die with joy rather than let her bosom bear a scar, her honor receive a tarnish. You cold-blooded, passionless Saxons, you can not figure this to yourselves. Your country is a

vast wilderness, your compatriots a *mélange.* There is no brotherhood in the tie that binds you. In France we are children—spoiled children, perhaps. It is this which explains the tumult of the masses, the caprice of the rich, the languor of the *noblesse.* We love to break into the excesses of the prodigal, and when we have run riot return to good order and be petted as the spoiled darlings of the race. Even in our abasement, we are the pride and wonder of the world," and, lighting up with the consolation of this pleasant conviction, the melancholy prince stroked his mustache and looked about him as a prophet who has castigated the sins of his people and then healed the wounds with a holy balm.

"You are certainly a wonderful race," assented Elliot, cautiously; "but what is this we hear of a civic outbreak against the Versailles government?"

"Oh, the *blague* of a few feather-heads. MacMahon is now at the head of the army, and he will quell the unquiet by his very name—"

"I trust so, I'm sure, for I shouldn't like to be in the city if the Reds took the notion to test the defenses made by Napoléon against internal enemies."

Theo arose as he spoke and met a group of ladies at the door. Some of them Elliot knew, and the conversation fell off into topics of the day. Presently some one asked for music, and the prince politely escorted Theo to the piano. Her voice was an agreeable one, and she sang the airs in vogue with charming expression. After a time she rose, asking one of the company to sing, and relinquished her place at the instrument.

Elliot had walked out and was seated on the balcony, where presently, the prince still officiating at the piano, Theo joined him.

"You have really been very ill, *bien aimé.* I see it in your face. I can tell it in your manner"—she slipped her hand gently into his—"why didn't you write me a word—you knew how I suffered—"

"You suffered?" he said, breathing hard and tightening the clasp on her hand until she uttered a little cry of pain; "why did you suffer, you couldn't doubt the fidelity of real love?"

"Ah—but I didn't know what was befalling you. At the Rue François Premier, no one would talk of you but your mother. Kate and Edith are partisans of Trajan and he, as you know, bears me no good will."

Elliot started; he turned and looked at her, as the soft lights from within fell on her round lovely face. Had he been dreaming? Surely, that guileless face could not be the mask of such odious treason as he had witnessed but a half hour before. And Trajan, too, she had spoken of him fearlessly. There could be no guilt in such confidence and candor.

"You told me once that you would reveal the cause of your repulsion to Trajan—tell me now. There is an important reason, or I wouldn't ask."

The green in the eyes intensified to blackness—a gleam of intelligence, as of a doubt suddenly dissolved, an end won, glanced for a moment in the shining orbs and then, in a low tone, she made answer:

"No, Elliot, I have often thought of my promise since. If Trajan can make his way and be happy, I have no right to put an obstacle in his path; no, dearest, you must not ask me. I can tell you no more."

"You have told me enough," he murmured, sorely troubled by the web in which he dimly realized he was floundering. "Let us talk no more of him. How does the prince's suit prosper with Bella?"

She tried to read his face before answering, but it was in the shade and she could only catch the profile as he bent over her in the shadow of the curtain.

"Your aunt's illness has kept Bella so occupied that the prince has but rarely seen her since she returned to Paris. I think he is making up his mind to lose her. He declares that she is *épris* of Trajan."

"What!"

"The prince declares that Bella loves Trajan wildly."

"The scoundrel! How dare he—I will—"

Elliot's voice had become so loud and hoarse that Theo rose in alarm and put her hands on his lips.

"Hush—for Heaven's sake—don't make a scene! Remember he is a jealous man and construes Bella's American freedom with a young man received as one of the family, as any Frenchman would who doesn't understand our liberal ideas of propriety."

"But from the way you repeated the prince, I inferred that you too believed the scandal," said Elliot, chafing in unaccountable rage.

"Why a scandal? I'm sure I loved Trajan once, until—until—"

"Until you found him an adventurer?"

"I declare, you are in an emphatic mood to-night. I'm afraid to open my lips—lest I shall come in for some of your emphatic testimonials; but, if you ask my opinion, I *do* think that Bella is in love with Trajan. Think it over yourself, and see the string of probabilities outside of the evidences she gave when I saw them together—"

"What evidences?" gasped Elliot, hoarsely.

"Who can put in words the thousand trifles that go to mark a woman's joy in the nearness of the man she loves; how put in the bald and meaningless fabric of words the change in the manner, the varying hues of color, the tremulous shade of the shadow of tone, the elastic step, the pretexts found to touch, if only the glove, or cane, of the object of this mute idolatry—tenfold more devouring, that it can not be spoken—the roseate life of lip and cheek? How tell all these and make them comprehensible to an indulged Adonis like you, who only believe you are loved, when your slaves put their neck under your lordly feet?"

"You have seen all this in Bella?"

"I have seen all this; and when I add Bella's transcen-

dental notions, her enthusiasm for the bizarre and heroic, her sense of gratitude to Trajan for that superb contest in which her life was the stake—I can not wonder that she should love him. Remember what you once told me of her penchant for the *declassé* heroes like Tito and Lord Kew, and you surely can not wonder that Trajan has taken hold of her imagination?"

"Does Trajan—share—does Trajan know—does he love her?"

Theo mused a moment—for all the world like one who has arranged a dialogue beforehand and, when it comes to pass, forgets the alternative sequiter. Her mind was inventive, not logical, and she couldn't decide whether yes or no would better further her purpose.

"I sometimes think he does, but I have seen him so little that I really should not say."

She sat silent, waiting for a reply, but none came. The music had ceased in the *salon*, and she rose, urging her duty as hostess.

"I will follow you presently and make my adieux. I don't feel equal to the insipidities of a conversazione now. Come in to-morrow with Jules and see Aunt Caroline; she is now able to lie on the sofa."

She stood so near him that he could have kissed her lips as she put her hand out. He looked away as he pressed it, and, almost snatching it from him, with a rustle of silk and gleam of jewels she vanished. He sate for a long time with his head buried in his hands, lost in the maze the sorceress had set for him.

Trajan, Bella, Theo—all unfaithful—could he trust any one? Would Edith, too, take a pull at his heart strings? There was a long hush in the gabble of the *salon*. He looked in. The room was deserted. Rising, he slipped quietly through to the vestibule, as the voices of the party resounded from the *salle à manger*.

On entering the house on the Rue François Premier, he

directed Pierre to see if Edith was still up and, if she were, to send her to him. He had barely time to put on his slippers and dressing robe, when the well known tap was heard at the door.

Edith tripped in, beaming. There was but one joy to her equal to that of hugging and spoiling this adored brother. His heart grew lighter at sight of her. He took her face between his two hands as she kneeled on the cushion at his feet. The odious atmosphere of deceit lifted from him and he saw with something of his natural boyish trustfulness—serene in conscious honor.

"Neddy, girl, you never tell lies, do you?"

"What a question?"

"But answer it, I command you," and he looked love and confidence in the startled blue eyes.

"Of course I don't—that is I did tell Katė a fib once, but it was to save 'somebody' annoyance," and she blushed, guiltily.

"A fib isn't a lie," said the mentor, with an easy indifference to the moralities; "*you* don't tell lies—that's enough. Now answer me: Does Bella love the Prince d'Amboise?"

"No."

"Sure?"

"Positive."

"Does she love any one?"

"Ah, that wouldn't be fair; you couldn't expect me to answer that."

"But I do, and you must. Whom does Bella love?"

"She never told me."

"Did you ever ask her?"

"No; I never did. I never asked you, but I know whom you love, or," she added, turning crimson, "whom you did love once."

"And whom did I love once, Ned?"

"Bella."

"When?"

"Before—before we went to Crécy."

"Are you sure? How do you know? What did you judge by?"

"I am sure, we all knew it—Bella knew it. I can tell, because I have seen—'somebody' do just as you used to do."

"Have you seen any 'somebody' do as I used to do when Bella is absent, since Crécy?"

"Yes."

Elliot started, and the next question was in the voice of quite another person—a person in mortal dread—shrinking, yet forced to confront some dreaded thing.

"Who have you seen giving these signs of love for Bella?"

"Jules Carnot; he adores her."

Edith felt her brother's frame collapse as if from a mighty tension. He held up her chin and looked intently into the wondering eyes, then with a sigh of ineffable satisfaction he asked:

"Does Bella know of Jules' love?"

"Did any woman ever meet a man twice who loved her and remain ignorant?"

"Yes; you let a man propose to you once and never dreamed that he thought any thing more of you than he did of me."

"But I was a child then. How should I know?"

"That, however, proves that your rule has exceptions. Does Bella encourage Jules' love? in other words does she love him?"

"She doesn't as yet, but she pities him, and if—if——"

"If what?"

"If somebody were to marry somebody else, she would not refuse Jules, and I fancy—but one can't tell these things."

"Who is the somebody?" For answer she stretched up her arms, and drawing his head down kissed him into silence.

"Do you believe it?"

"I know it." He leaned back in the deep chair, and she, folding her arms on his knee, as she had done when she was a small maid in pinafores, presented the picture of the Raphael cherub strayed from its companion angel. He had called her in with the determination to command her to see Trajan no more. He had not meant to divulge the cause, simply warning her that love between them was impossible, marriage out of the question. But the avowal he had so dextrously extracted, revealing the chance he still held to win Bella, filled him with such joy that the Draconian edict was too much for him to pronounce.

Misery courts company, even in love, you will observe. This young gentleman, who had hovered about the object of his devotions all his life; who grew, if not indifferent, at all events, over-confident; who had gone after the woman whose feet, according to the book, lead to hell, would have held the black draught to these innocent lips, which had just prattled life to his hope, without a commiserating pang, had it been death she had announced to his hope!

Truly, indeed, when we see through a glass darkly, the mind takes the line of the vision. He had come from lips that insinuated disloyalty and deceit, and his soul was filled with unbelief. He had looked in this pure well of undefiled innocence, and he hated himself for the burden he bore, and shrank from clouding the azure of her horizon with the black cloud that for the moment had discolored the firmament to his own vision. His perplexity grew into anguish, and that anguish touched the spring of tears as he looked down into the trustful eyes watching the play of his features. Her utter unconsciousness of the coming blow terrified him. How should it be broken to her? Who should wither her spotless purity with this baleful blast of iniquity? He started angrily to his feet, hardly noticing the disturbed figure, and swore to himself that he would bury the secret rather than this angel should be made wretched.

Trajan had grown older since this foul crime. He knew the ways of young men; he knew how few resist temptation. Indeed, could he claim to be unspotted from the world? He thought of his immediate past with a guilty shock as the relapses of the winter suddenly rose up in lurid judgment before him. He had repented in shame unutterable; his punishment was with him every hour of the day as he met the trustful eyes of his mother. Trajan, too—might he not have done bitter penance for his sin?

Was it in expiation of that he had determined on a suicide's ignoble end? Providence had made him, Elliot, the instrument to save him; was it the part assigned by Providence to finish that work by denying him a chance to prove his purpose to be an honest man? All he had seen of Trajan pleaded for indulgence. His nature was noble, in spite of the hideous aberration of his youth. What man of sensibility of heart could fall under the angelic witchery of Edith without purification and strength to do better and manlier things? In any event, he was not in the frame of mind to deal with the problem now. He would, perhaps, take Kate into his confidence, or, perhaps, Philip—yes, Philip's coolness and knowledge of the world would help him out of the difficulty. This solution gave him some comfort, and he then bethought him of the poor child watching him in large-eyed wonder. When the brother and sister kissed the good-night parting, both felt nearer than they had been since the wicked shadow of Theo had darkened the doorway of their intimacy.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

HORROR'S HEAD.

PARIS meanwhile had plunged with brute ferocity into a frenzy of colossal combat. Buried in the aristocratic seclusion of their quarter, most unlike any of the segments of the vast circle that embraces the inveterately unruly of a *schwärmerei*, that thinks, resolves, acts for a whole nation, the Ardens had only a confused sense of the lurid flames that lighted the horizon about them. Even the Attila incursion of the northern hordes on the first of March came to their ears through the exaggerated reports of Pierre and the domestics, who had slipped out to the Champs Élysées to fix basilisk eyes upon the conquering columns as they glittered by in the glorious sunshine of that fatal day. They knew that uneasiness was thick in the atmosphere, that many of their timid neighbors had locked their palaces and fled, until the uncertainty should be brought to an end. The daily journals, conscious of the dragon crop sown during the siege, told only half truths during the weeks the hell broth of social rapine was stewing in the fetid purlieus of the malefactors. It was knowledge of the direful mischief brewing that impelled Trajan to risk the lives of those he loved, in the fruitless mission to Gambetta. The Republican Autochthon was not sulking, Achilles-like, in his Pyrenean retreat. He was really ill. Trajan found the man who for five months held the purse of France, through whose hands millions had passed subject to his own account alone, buried in two little rooms over a grocer's shop in St. Sebastian. He listened to the young man's story of the dangerous drift of the Mobiles and Nationals, but shook his head when he wound up by imploring him to come to the rescue of law and order; the rescue of the Republic, reeling into the abyss of anarchy.

"No," he said, "Thiers brands me as a 'furious madman;' Grévy declares before the Assembly that I shall die in the skin of a *révoltée*. I shall take care to keep clear of all factions, until France recovers from her present shock. Have no fear for the Republic. After Sédan Imperialism is forever at an end; the robber gang of Orleans are barred by the memory of that skinflint pilferer, the royal Macaire, Louis Philippe; there is but one Bourbon, the Count de Chambord. He is an imbecile like all his race, and France need not fear him. Within two years I shall be at the head of a party which will lead France to the rational system your great Jefferson implanted in America. Besides," he added gloomily, "the committee is mistaken. I should have no influence in Paris at this time. The *révoltées* would not heed me, and the men of principle could not help me. The disease is in the blood of Paris, sweltered into venom by twenty years of quackery. It must come out before it can be treated. This is as good a time as any. Let the Assembly incapables and their tools, the ministry, experiment. They will soon learn that ruling and plotting are two different *métiers*. I have no concern about France or myself. My time will come."

No pleading could shake this resolution, re-enforced by the physician's peremptory assertion, that without rest the ex-dictator would collapse within a week, and that he could not guarantee his restoration even with rest. With gloomy forebodings Trajan laid the result of his mission before a committee consisting wholly of the men then and afterward most intimately identified with Gambetta. They heard it with despair, for even then, (it was the morning of the 18th of March) the city was virtually in the hands of the malefactors. The government troops had been defeated in an attempt to carry off the cannon on Montmartre, almost in the heart of the most populous quarter, and the regulars of the line were deserting *en masse* to join their brethren under the red flag of the Commune. The generals Clement,

Thomas and Lecompte had been seized and were to be tried before a military court the next day. The adventurers had formed a central committee, omnipotent in the quarters.

Rothschild and the Bank of France had been forced to supply funds—an advance of five millions under penalty of pillage. Proclamations had been sent out to the provinces, inviting a federal union of communes and the decentralization of power. Decrees had been issued forbidding egress from the city on any pretext, and another subjecting every able-bodied male to conscription in the ranks of the national guard. But the law of brute reprisal did not end there. Every male, wheresoever found, must show a badge indicating his company and regiment. Any impulsive patriot in the street was empowered to demand the badge, and a failure to produce it was followed by a march to the nearest court.

Men were plenty. The masters of the imperial city, suddenly transformed from the modest functions of butchers, tinkers, joiners and shoemakers, saw the lamps of the new destinies of the race lighted by the tinsel they had so lately abhorred. Texas is not more lavish in titles of a warlike sort. Though the title of general had been abolished by the Spartans of the committee, brigadiers' insignia decorated every third man met. While the Draconian code was promulgated in one breath, the nicest problems of ethics were resolved with a Platonic lucidity that entitle the thinkers to a place in the Pantheon of the legists.

Any woman proving an intimate amour with a thoughtless Lothario, was by her own mere say-so accepted into the new dispensation as a legitimate wife. Any castaway, whatever the ceremonial discrepancies existing at his birth, was declared loin and limb, heir and hope of the astonished author of his or her birth. Never, indeed, was a world made virtuous, if not sinless, with such facility. The title deeds of all property were ordered to be burned, that the brotherhood of man might begin on truly equal terms. Tragedy

sullen, stupendous and vague, took on the mask of laughter, holding both her sides. Passion exhaling monstrosities that invested pigmies with great powers ; hate searching victims, cupidity turning gullibility and timidity to treason—a jocund, terrible madness epidemic, brooding like a colossal devil-fish, its antennæ reaching into every crevice of human activity and collapsing to gorge itself under cover of blinding showers of blood.

Apparitions—ghosts of men and laws, and forms, and customs of things that were neither might, nor right, regnant ; the fool's cap on the fool's crown, and the blood of the innocent and guilty alike in the maddening cup. Incessant aberration of sidereal flame. Life a joke, death a mockery, religion a legend, love a travesty. Traffic stilled, yet human want rampant ; the ancient reign of night, unbroken by a gleam of the light of sixty centuries of mind ; the light chariot wheels of vanity replaced by the Juggernaut of Maniacy, bearing to the baying canon the mocking satyrs of godless frenzy ; misery, squalor, crime, panoplied in the splendor of state, no longer prowling night birds, shunned and obscene, but masters of the tabernacles of all the holies of life.

A season of stertorous breath and piteous comedy ; of strutting manikins and dismal imbecilities, not solemnized into the tragic by even the Satanic unction of blood. Open putrefactions and escaping social vapors of the dankest and unseemliest smell and form. Men dying gayly and sadly ; women dying vauntingly and pathetically ; babes born into a cataclysm of the horrible, the unnatural.

A prodigious vat of fermenting hates, revenges, loves, despair and, grotesque enough,—sublunary ambition. All the city houseless, for doors were barred in vain. Terror was the sesame that turned every lock, made the blind to see, the lame to fly, the cripple to stand erect. Sorrow and fear and hope there were, but masked in a bleary joyfulness ; prayer, devotion and truth, but clothed in profanity, treason

and profligacy ; where theft was the law, vice was no longer secretive or coward ; where the lusts of the flesh were the rule, hypocrisy held her hands idle. The rights of man were riot, pillage, violence, rapine, murder, and its weapon the law of the suspect.

A whisper was an indictment, a hearing a sentence, a sentence, death. Two million people, three-fourths guiltless, ruled by one-fourth sinless, too, for since there was no law there could be no crime! Two millions of people huddled on a patch of ground, divided from each other by walls of brick and streets and a river, but never for a moment out of each other's sight—bound indissolubly by the hideous fetters of common complicity and common fear.

Under the reign of this primeval law, as there was no crime there were no prisons ; and the malefactor was the equal of the social tyrant who, under the suspension of this new code, had sentenced him to seclusion. The first right of man being the right to slaughter, the guillotine is solemnly burned in the public street, as the godless memorial of patriarch genuflexion—in the anger of the elect. Precedent was a superstition—precedent was abolished ; habit a slavery—the million were manumitted from it. Privacy a treason—it was declared suspect ; non-citizenship an evasion—it was disregarded. Were not all men equal? What matter, then, if born in Siberia or Patagonia, under the reign of liberty, equality and fraternity all were children of the one mother, Paris.

This, in a word, was the political and social existence of Paris from March 20th to May 24th, when a climax came, to which the foregoing summary is as a holiday parade to actual war. The ten weeks not only dealt discomfiture to the carefully prepared triumphs of our charming Theo, but wrought her disaster, which I am sure the magnanimous reader will regard as abundant expiation for the ungenerous use she has thus far made of her matchless

penetration, beauty and cleverness. If our pleasant vices return to plague us, our sins come back to punish, and therefore let us be grateful that we are not gifted—let us be content that we are only hum-drum. That a tender smile from Joan or Darby fills us with joy, that a glimpse now and then of the luxuries of this world, in the grand palace of our neighbor Crœsus, does not make us discontented with our two-story brick, the shabby hall, the stuffy parlor and the third appearance of Sunday's roast in the middle of the week! For what shall it profit you repining for a gig, a summer villa, a Paisley shawl, or any other form or species of gimcrack, if to get and to hold, you are dragged into ways and means that give the world a right to hale you before the high court of public opinion, where the proud man's scorn and the whips and scorpions of envy have a right to fall upon and lash you?

Never was Theo so satisfied with her ministry of deceit and craft as when she quitted Elliot on the balcony of the Rue Galilée that March night. She had molded his ductile nature into the very grooves she herself had fashioned. She had by a sublimity of artifice confirmed Elliot's suspicions of his friend, and had added an incentive to his anger which would confirm him in driving the reprobate from his sister's presence. She dared not confide her unscrupulous maneuvers to Jules, not that she doubted his approval, but rather distrusted his skill in helping her to achieve them. She preferred, too, in an imperial spirit of self-confidence, to do the work alone. She held that a secret once divulged was no longer a secret; furthermore, with such an ally as Elliot, doubly her minion, there was no need of even remotely compromising the future husband of Bella.

When she called at the Ardens the next day and found Trajan in the drawing-room with Edith, she was startled, but not disconcerted. Elliot, she made up her mind, was waiting to test the double perfidy of his quondam

friend. When, however, she learned from Edith that her brother had gone to Versailles to visit Philip on urgent family business she was not so well satisfied. He might be gone a day or two—he might be back in the evening. It depended on the affairs in question and the presence of a certain officer of the cabinet, who might not have returned from Bordeaux yet. Trajan expressed his surprise that Theo ventured in the streets at such a time.

"Oh, Jules is protection enough; he is covered by the shield of Jules Favre, and the new government, even if it be permitted to establish itself, can find no fault with his patriotism."

"I'm not sure of that. I heard the mob at the Hotel de Ville denouncing death to Gambetta, and certainly he can't be accused of lack of Republicanism or patriotism. I myself have been denounced, and if I were found in the city it would go hard with me."

Jules looked grave at this, but said nothing. Trajan taking his departure a little later made Jules a sign to follow him.

"I only wanted to warn you that there is danger for all of us—for me as well as you. I was at a meeting of the club this morning and it is known that the Central Committee mean mischief, so soon as the city is entirely under their control. Elliot's mission to Versailles is to get money and passports for the family, as it is clearly unsafe to remain. They will go to England just as soon as he gets back."

"But you are a Republican and have influence with the Reds—won't your word protect us in case of danger?" asked Jules anxiously, thinking of the separation from Bella.

"I shall be lucky if I can save my own neck. As a friend of Gambetta's I should stand little favor with the chaps parading under the name of Communists—of which they understand as much as a Malay the doctrines of Confucius! That miserable wretch, Ferré, has circulated

the report of my handiwork in the escape of the empress, and my presence with Napoléon at Metz and Sédan. I would be shot on sight."

"Then you advise me to send my family from Paris?"

"I certainly advise it—for the present. Just look at the situation. There isn't a single policeman in Paris; there isn't a court open; there isn't a vestige of legal authority of any kind. Suppose a ruffian takes it into his head to enter this house? What's to prevent him? The servants? Who knows but they are plotting this moment to carry off the silver and valuables? Should we meet a band of plunderers at this moment, what would resistance mean? Treason to the new order of things—which so soon as the mask is thrown off will declare the right of equal division in property—pretending that Communism means that!"

"My God, Gray, you terrify me. What shall I do?"

"Get what money you can and leave the city—go no matter where, but get out of this reign of burlesque, that may turn to terror—unless the Versailles folks show more energy than they have thus far practiced; but go back to the *salon* and don't breathe a word of this to the family."

Jules returned to the rest, full of apprehension. He had counted on a coming crisis, but he had hoped that the interest he had made with the revolutionists in other days would save himself and family from serious jeopardy. Theo detected the solicitude in his manner the instant he came in, but attributed it to another and perhaps to her more alarming business. Had Trajan been informed of the mesh woven about his feet and had he suspected her handiwork? She couldn't restrain the horrible impatience burning her. Refusing the pressing invitation to spend the day she pleaded a violent headache, and much to her brother's chagrin, who was loth to quit Bella, hurried out. She couldn't wait to get into the cab to ask the question:

"Trajan has been telling you something serious—I see it in your face. What is it?"

He had not meant to disturb her with his alarm, but he knew her too well to attempt to evade the truth and told her frankly the subject of the interview. He was astonished at her sigh of relief when the menacing danger they were in was revealed, and asked in surprise:

"Did you apprehend worse than this?"

"I didn't know what to think," she returned evasively. "Just now I am suspicious of Gray; his intimacy with the Ardens keeps us at a distance. I really believe that he is capable of going over to Bella. She is far more fitted to a man of his intellect than her little cousin, who is nothing but pretty. You needn't tell me that Trajan really loves Edith. If he does it's a mere caprice. Men are never constant to women whom they win without effort, and nobody could fail to see that Edith adored him long before he gave her a thought. She's a sly little puss, too. He hadn't been at Crécy two days before she had him at her side every moment, on pretexts that would have put an old stager like you on your guard."

"On my mettle, you mean. I'm free to say I should not make much resistance to such eyes as hers, and then the Arden fortune—that would be an argument that a poor devil like me couldn't resist."

"What shall we do—quit Paris?"

"That's the only thing I see to be done."

"That means separation from Bella and all the work over again!"

"If it were not for that I should be only too glad to leave the place."

"But why not go with the Ardens?"

"How? They won't invite us and we can't thrust ourselves on them."

"Learn where they mean to go and find yourself in the same haven—nothing simpler."

"And you—what will become of you and the father? Lafayette can take care of Clare."

"I don't know what I shall do just yet, until I have seen Elliot. All depends on him."

When they reached home Trajan's warning was emphasized by Papa Carnot, who had been to the American Embassy. The minister warned him, as well as others of his countrymen, come to him for advice, that every thing was in such confusion he could promise no security. He advised every one to quit Paris. There was a scene of rage and lamentation when the minister concluded. Not a foreign family in Paris had means to get away. Five months of siege with every commodity of life at fabulous prices had emptied the fullest purses. There were not a score of people in the city who had a penny's balance at the banker's.

Nor if they had would it be of any avail, as all business having been suspended, the banks were virtually closed when the siege came to an end. Nor had the threatening shape of affairs from March 1st encouraged alacrity in resuming operations. Lafayette must be consulted, Theo declared.

Nothing could be done until the state of his finances was known. Jules set out at once to see the millionaire, who was occupying the palace of the parental Grovels—they having fled to London when the city was about being invested—leaving Marion to comfort Aunt Clare, as he persisted in calling his brother's wife. Lafayette, with true western disdain for danger, scouted the proposal to fly.

"No; if there were fun in the wind he meant to take a full hand. Let Theo and the old man turn in here with us. There's lots of room and the women folks will be company for each other. I'm not sure that I could command funds at such short notice; beside, there's a heap of money due us here and I'm charged by the syndicate to see to its collection. Lock up the ranch door there," he added jovially, nodding toward the Rue Galilée, "and bring all your traps over here. We've got a whole brigade of servants, and they will be all the better with a house full to keep their hands in."

"I'm afraid that these very servants will prove the great-

est danger," said Jules gloomily. "They are spies and sneaks at best, and if things arrive at the pass every thing now points to, they will join the pillagers against us." As Jules left the room Lafayette followed him. "There's another reason that prevents our going. Clare will soon be a mother. She must be kept quiet for a month. She's very happy with the children, and a move would only upset her."

Thus it seemed that fate itself had entered the lists against Theo as well as France, and that obstacles no foresight could have provided against were arraying themselves irresistibly in the path of her well-conceived project.

Trajan's uneasiness was great the next day, when he found that Elliot had not come back. Communication with Versailles threatened hourly to be cut off. The ministers, who had lingered in the city in the vain hope of preserving the appearance of a national *régime*, had been obliged to fly the night before. The last of the Assembly's troops, cantoned in the gardens of the Luxembourg, had passed within sight of the Arden windows that morning, hooted and execrated by the mobs, when they found the cajoleries of the female patriots thrown away upon them. Wherever the troops had met the mob hitherto, the tears and embraces of the women had shaken their constancy, and when ordered to fire, they had thrown down their arms, refusing to massacre women and children. It was by this artifice that the entire garrison of the city had been seduced and had compelled the cabinet of Thiers to fly. The city was now completely in the hands of the turbulents, and the mask was at once thrown off.

The walls of every quarter flamed with proclamations defining the extraordinary evolution from law to lawlessness. Those who could afford it at once engaged private guards for their homes and property. But even this was soon deprived them, by the drunken patrols of the Communards marching through the streets, prying into courtyards and forcing off all who were able-bodied.

Trajan had secured a guard for the Rue François Premier the night of Elliot's departure, but was not much surprised when the frightened *concierge* informed him that she had seen the red-sashed myrmidons of the Central Committee force the protesting patriots to join them.

Realizing the uselessness of entrusting the duty to a stranger, Trajan secured a mansard directly facing the Arden windows and took up his post there until Elliot should return. He cautioned the *concierge* to keep the American flag displayed just inside the door, and to explain the fact that the Ardens were Americans to any intruding patrols of patriots.

He watched the house all day and saw three bands enter the portals, tarry awhile and come out laden with bottles and food. Under cover of early darkness, he hastened over, resolved to confide the danger to Bella, in order that a night incursion might not unduly alarm the family or find them all unprepared. The mother and sister were disappointed but not alarmed by Elliot's prolonged stay at Versailles. They had been busy preparing for the contemplated flight. All their valuables were securely packed, and there need not be an hour's delay after Elliot came. Mrs. Briscoe, though very weak, was equal to the journey by slow stages. Seizing a moment when Edith and her mother were busied elsewhere, Trajan confided the dangers of the family to Bella, informed her of the precautions he had taken, and counseled her to gradually accustom the others to the situation, without alarming them.

He would meanwhile endeavor to get some protection from the American minister. As he could not venture in the street during the day, lest he should be snapped up by the patrols and marched off to fight, he could come to them only after dark. By a signal in the window, however, she could at any time call him. Ten days wore on in this suspense, which grew into heart-break-

ing anguish, as the brother gave no sign. It was a constant terror by day and anguish by night. Trajan himself had dreadful forebodings of Elliot's fate. He gave the American minister no peace, imploring him to send an emissary to Versailles to make inquiry for the missing Elliot. But the era of reprisals had set in, and the Commune obstinately refused to permit any communication with the "Prussians of Versailles," as the Thiers government was called.

Not daring to leave the family without a protector, Trajan was tied to his post. A score of times he had narrowly missed discovery. Three nights he had been forced to lurk on the roofs of the many-gabled mansards. When he visited the family it was in disguise, for even the domestics could not be trusted. He had urged the minister to receive the ladies in the embassy, but that refuge was crowded with terrified women, to whose misfortune poverty was added. Bella had held up the hopes of the mother and sister with sustained discretion, though her own heart was cruelly torn by the dreadful uncertainty. The Carnots had not been seen since Trajan's warning. Lafayette thoughtlessly exposing himself in the street and trusting to his American citizenship, had been arrested and put into one of the national guard companies. Jules had managed to fly to Versailles, and Papa Carnot's age was a present exemption from molestation, though he was informed that when the *patrie* was in danger, age would not excuse him from taking his place at the barricades.

Misfortune had fallen heavily upon the house in the Rue Galilée. Papa Carnot had left the household treasures under the *concierge's* guard. One morning her little girl came over and reported the Communards pillaging the rooms. He hastened over and sure enough Theo's exquisite collections were the prey of the vandals. In the *salon* he found a squad of Amazons in short petticoats, scarlet jackets and jaunty red liberty caps, heaping the spoil of the apartments upon sheets stretched upon the floor. They

were armed with pistols and short cutlasses, and saluted him with mock gravity as he tottered into his deserted home.

"What is the meaning of this robbery?" he asked, trembling with anger. "I am a foreigner."

"Ho-ho! It is the Père Carnot," said one of the Amazons with decisive emphasis, appearing in the door of Theo's chamber, her hands filled with letters, which she had tied in a package. "This is the father of the female aristocrat, who ruins honest work-folk by robbing them of their characters. Ah, Papa Carnot, it is the turn of the serfs now. We shall have a fine dance for your grande young demoiselle one of these days."

Papa Carnot sank helplessly into a seat. The voice was the voice of Céleste, the dismissed and disgraced bonne. The rest of the band, paying no heed to the old man, tumbled cloaks, ornaments, vases, rugs, every thing portable, into the sheets and table-cloths spread on the floor, and tying them into stout bundles, dragged them to the door, each marking her own spoil with initials in red. Céleste, who had disappeared after her explanation, soon returned laden with silver and dresses. The old gentleman rose and entered the dining-room. It was completely denuded; the chambers were stripped of every thing, the curtains, rugs and draperies, down to the bolsters. He turned, speechless with impotent fury, and made for the door.

"Ah no, *cher père* Carnot. You would not be so impolite as to desert these charming ladies when they have taken so much pains to call on you. You have offered us no refreshments. Citoyenne Leflo, some burgundy—no—some champagne; the People, in possession of their property, do not refuse to divide like the selfish bourgeoisie," and Céleste, extracting glasses from one of the bursting sacks of loot, gayly set them on the dainty guéridon, which was spared only because inconvenient to bestow in the extemporized packing cases.

"*Le voici*," laughed a comrade, producing the champagne. —When the glasses were filled Céleste, casually girding on her revolver belt, pointed to one of the glasses, saying with droll gravity: "Help yourself, Père Carnot, and serve the ladies; the tyranny of servitude being abolished, it is by politeness only that equals serve equals."

A roar of laughter followed this humorous assertion of the workings of equal rights. Papa Carnot looked in terror from one to the other of the rollicking furies. He saw that they were not to be trifled with, and with trembling hands proffered each in turn the foaming cups of crystal.

"Charming! You shall be a city father. You take naturally to the doctrines of the People," and Céleste, raising the glass gave the toast, "*A votre santé*, and long life to the Commune." All the glasses were raised and clinked against the cup in the shaking hands of the reluctant *convive*.

"Now, Papa Carnot, remain here and see that no evil-disposed aristocrat comes to disturb your treasures. We will relieve you of this useless baggage, which would only be a temptation to the patriots. Say to mademoiselle, your aristocrat daughter, that she will receive a visit from me before long. She must be tired of princes and millionaires by this time, and will be glad to see a representative of the People."

Céleste laughed grimly, as with her howling cortege she passed out, dragging her spoil, as did the others. The poor gentleman sat helplessly where they had left him. He heard them close the hall door and turn the key. He ran to the window and watched for their appearance on the street below. There was a tumbril waiting. Presently they appeared, the sacks were laden on this, and spying him leaning over the balcony rail, the Amazons kissed their hands gayly and drove off. It was an hour or more before the *concierge* rescued the prisoner. She had been charged on penalty of imprisonment to detain him an hour, but it was plain from the greedy look in her eyes, that if she had not been in league

with the robbers, her sympathies were not wholly against them. Theo's rage and terror when she heard of the invasion and sack of the house threw her into a fever. She bore up with resignation until she heard of Céleste's abstraction of the letters. When that was told her, she turned ghastly and sank, as if shot, upon the sofa, moaning and wringing her hands.

"Can nothing be done to arrest that fiend? Ah! we shall be ruined—we shall be ruined!" she cried. "Why did Jules go and leave us to these furies?" It was a very different Theo from the masterful spirit we have seen heretofore in these pages. But she was not to be put down without an effort. A half-hour later she handed her father three notes, addressed to Elliot, Lafayette, and her former coparcener in the Rue Scribe.

"Let no human being get hold of these. Deliver them yourself into the hands of each person named, and don't give up if you have to wait all night."

In the letter to her brother-in-law, Theo warned him that unless the letters were gotten from Céleste, the heads of the family would be in danger in case the revengeful maid laid them before the Revolutionists. They contained, among others, Pietri's correspondence with Jules while he was an aid to Grammont. It was long after midnight when Lafayette himself came in agitated and fatigued. He had, so soon as receiving the note, set out with Gibson, an Englishman, like himself impressed into the commune. He had ascended to Céleste's room and demanded the letters, while Gibson kept watch at the door below. At first the girl denied the theft, but when Lafayette resolutely pushed her aside, she fled to the bedroom and taking them from a place of concealment, handed them to her lover, a strapping soldier. He made for the *escalier du service*, and Lafayette, running to the window, warned Gibson to seize the man and get the package. Céleste and her mother set upon Lafayette and detained him for some time. When he reached

the street the soldier was lying on the pavement moaning, and Gibson was nowhere to be seen. Lafayette had gone back to the barrack, but during his absence his troop had been sent to the Mazas prison, and to save himself from suspicion, he had joined another command and gained a five-hour furlough to relieve Clare's anxiety. Theo breathed a sigh of relief. At all events, the letters were no longer in the hands of her energetic enemy. Gibson she knew as an English resident and a man of honor. He would take the first opportunity to send them to Lafayette.

"Now," said Lafayette, "the first thing you must count on is a visit from Céleste at the head of her troop. If she finds you here, your life won't be worth a prayer."

"I have thought of that," said Theo in some agitation. "But she can be evaded until things are settled. The Bellechasses have asked me to stay with them as they are quite alone. I will play the part of governess. None of their old servants are with them and I shall not be recognized. Beside, their house is in a deep garden and we can have warning before the bandits reach the house. Under the old part of the château there are subterraneous retreats, used by the conspirators against Richelieu, in which one can be secure for months. Céleste will not molest Clare, she adores her. I'll go at once and you must take me, as with your uniform no one will suspect us."

So Theo played the part of governess in the halls of the Bellechasse, and a very merry time she made of the siege, enlivening the sad hearts of the household waiting in terror to hear from the young count at Versailles.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

TRAJAN PLAYS A NEW RÔLE.

SUSPENSE had turned the circle in the Rue François I. into a house of mourning. Mrs. Arden had worn herself out in journeys and supplications to the minister. She had even gone to the Hotel de Ville against Trajan's imploring remonstrances. No trace of Elliot could be obtained. The chief of the committee had answered her gruffly that a man who had left the city in the crisis was unworthy seeking, and advised her to regard his loss with the patriotic philosophy of Brutus—sacrificing his unworthy son on the altar of the Roman Commune. If he did turn up the *patrie* would deal with him. The servants had been offered sums that would have given them luxury for life, to keep them faithful. But terror of the swarming spies of the central oligarchy, if not secret sympathy, as well as the open profession, which every one—women as well as men—were forced to make, kept them from the dangerous mission of seeking their master.

Trajan heard with terror that the chief had taken down Elliot's name, and Philip's—as Mrs. Arden supposed to aid in their return, but as he knew very well, to enable the commune to lay hands on them, should they appear in Paris.

A straggler found between the lines during the week had been publicly shot, and the ferocious journals of the Anarchists called for instant execution upon any one giving the least symptoms of being a "suspect." The rich who refused to give—to hand over their jewelry and valuables realizable in cash, should be considered "suspect." The citizens who had feasted upon Paris in the days of its fleshly lust, should be considered "suspect," if they tried to evade the duty to humanity embodied in the cause of the commune. Mrs. Arden had given lavishly. She had furnished bales of lint for the wounded. She had supplied rations for the troops of

the quarter, and thanks to her profusion the house had escaped the sinister stigma of "suspect." The night of Theo's flight from Céleste, as Bella sat in the library trying to read, she heard a loud wrangling at the street door. Going cautiously to the vestibule landing she heard the *concierge* speaking sharply :

"But I tell you, citoyenne, Monsieur Arden has not been in Paris for a fortnight. He left before the People became their own masters. I assure you I speak the truth. There is sickness in the house—dangerous fever," she added, with a Frenchwoman's ready wit, "which prevents us from going into the apartments. The physician forbids every one entering."

"Are the young demoiselles still here ?"

"They are, but both are down with the malady, and as red as boiled lobsters with the disgusting fever blotches. I assure you, citoyenne, the doctor himself fears to go near them."

"*Très bien.* It is as a friend of the family I am come. I will write mademoiselle, the cousin of Citoyen Arden presently. Tell her I have been here and that she will hear from me before long. I am the Citoyenne Voyon of the Garde Amazone, Lorette."

"Good night, citoyenne."

"*Au revoir*, citoyenne."

Bella heard the heavy door swing back, then closed, the chains put up and the bolts pushed into their sockets. Then the *concierge* muttering to her daughter :

"I shan't tell the family a word of this, but if I am not about and this brazen hussy should get in, run and warn the demoiselles to paint their faces and hands with blotches—that will keep the trollope at a respectful distance, for she has a sort of beauty, and no woman will risk that even for robbery or revenge. What on earth can she want of the young monsieur ? He is not one to have a *liaison* with such as that."

Bella had heard enough, and softly closing the door, sat down to reflect on what she should do. She determined that it would be safer to put Trajan on his guard in the new difficulty. He had almost ceased coming to the house as it was dangerous to attract attention, and both distrusted the fidelity of the servants. But the conduct of the *concierge* left no doubt of her trustworthiness. A signal had been arranged to meet the new exigencies, and she straightway sat down and wrote word for word what she had heard. Going to the last window of the dining-room she passed a lamp three times before the drawn curtains, then turning the flame so that the room was left almost in darkness, she drew back the shade and looked up at the mansard opposite.

A light burning inside was suddenly extinguished and she knew her signal had been seen. Putting the note in a small reticule to which a string was attached, she waited perhaps twenty minutes, then softly opened the glass, which as in all French houses moved on hinges, and held the reticule in her hand. The figure of a man came slowly along close to the walls of the house. As it arrived within sight of the window, the hat was raised carelessly and the hair stroked, as if in reflection or fatigue. By this sign she knew it was Trajan and let the note down. In an instant a jerk warned her that he had the note. Immensely relieved, she returned to her book, vainly trying to fix her mind on the girlish miseries of Maggie Tulliver. Edith had gone to sit with her mother and Mrs. Briscoe, while Kate, exhausted by the strain of the last miserable days, was fairly ill and in bed.

An hour had passed, it was not yet ten o'clock, when she heard the *concierge's* bell jingle very lightly. She got up in great dread and opened the vestibule door and passed quite to the corridor in her excitement. The voice of the *concierge* was heard asking through the wicket "Who's there?" The response could not be heard, but after an instant the little panel was shot back and the *concierge* came up the stairs. Bella had hardly time to enter and close the door when a

light tap came. When she opened the door the *concierge* held a note toward her, saying with a smile, "Good news I hope, mademoiselle, it is from Monsieur Trajan. *Bon soir.*"

"*Bon soir,*" she answered smiling kindly and confidingly on the honest woman, whose loyalty had been so well proven. "Have you every thing you need—wouldn't Amalie like some *bon-bons?* I have some I forgot to give her."

"Oh, mademoiselle, how kind you always are to us. May the *bon Dieu* be your guardian," she exclaimed fervently, as Bella returned with a box of *bon-bons* into which she had slipped two gold pieces. Trajan's note simply said:

"Have no uneasiness about the woman. She knows me; she saw me at the Carnots—but beyond that, there is, I think, no danger, unless she should see Edith or the family. She can do no mischief. She can not know any thing that will compromise us now. Be doubly careful, however, to keep Edith in the dark. I know it is cruel duplicity to put on you. It is, however, kindness to her. I will prove to you in the future that you have not carried this burden so heroically, in vain. I have a plan that will soon extricate you from this ordeal. Be careful in using the signal. I think we are suspected in a certain quarter.

"TRAJAN."

"P. S.—I am going to come in about noon, when we can arrange to extricate ourselves from this intolerable suspense."

Edith entered as she finished the note, which Bella thrust hastily into her pocket.

"Mamma is asleep at last," she said wearily. "Oh, Bella, what are we going to do? Some one should go to Versailles and look for Elliot. I'm sure he's ill. He certainly would have found some way to send us word, if he were well—what can that be?" The *concierge's* bell was ringing a peal loud enough to wake the sleepers in the mansard. Bella rose in agitation. A second peal louder and more peremptory than before rang through the lower corridor.

"Go and tranquillize mother and aunty," exclaimed Bella

calmly. "I will go to the door and see what the ringing means." Reaching the landing she could hear the *concierge* opening her own door. Then the wicket slipped back cautiously. A sharp "Who's there and what's wanted?" a little cry, half screech and half gulp and the rattling of chains with a simultaneous rush of bolts, creaking of hinges, then a figure rushing up the stairs three at a bound, then her consciousness gone, a pair of stout arms around her, a mustached mouth devouring her lips, and the vague vision of a second, but more deliberate figure coming up the stairs.

Oh! Elliot—Elliot!—and Philip!—ah—ah—ah—kiss—kiss—kiss.

There is no telling how long this selfish silliness would have continued, had a flying robe not appeared in the hall within, then a little gurgling shriek, and then a collapse into kisses, rapture and the joy that words have no business to try to tell. Then a joyous cavalcade to mamma's bedside, where more and devouter raptures forbid intrusion, and then a clearing out to give the two glad mammas and Kate time to appear before the two restored wanderers. The prodigals were in the guise of workmen. Their story was not remarkable.

First, the Versailles authorities would give Elliot no safe conduct. They had taken letters which he had sent to announce his detention, but he had, of course, received no response, since they had never been received. He had heard through an *attaché* of the legation once, about a week before, that all were well and anxious about him, which was the first hint that his messages had not been delivered. Then Philip had tried to get a detail to bring him to Paris and had only succeeded that very morning. They had sneaked through to the Mount Valerian outposts and waited their chance to mix with the mob of the Commune, parading the fields near Meudon. They had been set to work on Fort Issy, and only escaped in the darkness. Since then they had been walking incessantly, not knowing the road, and finally had caught a "bus" at the Chaillot gate, which brought them almost to the

door. Neither of them would have been recognized, save by the eyes of love. But they were very happy, as you may imagine, so happy that the hours of the night passed and day was breaking when they separated to get some rest.

There was a cloud on their happiness; Elliot had gone to Versailles to negotiate for money, but had failed. He couldn't understand why; but Kate who heard him turned quite ashen and collapsed in her seat.

It was not until she had reached her own chamber, that Bella thought of Trajan. She looked out of the window. It was too light to make use of the signal, even had she been sure that the faithful watcher was at his post. She was perplexed and discomfited. She knew Trajan didn't want to meet Elliot—and yet how to prevent it? A thought struck her. Going to Elliot's door, she knocked lightly. He opened it himself, but as she entered Edith was there and she didn't want to speak before her. She must, however, say something, and broke out rather inconsequently:

"You never said a word about our prospects. Are we to get away? I'm afraid mamma can't stand the confinement, she needs open air drives." Elliot had led her to the sofa as she spoke, where Edith was sitting. He shook his head. "I'm afraid we're caught in a trap here. There is no human possibility of getting out of the city. Even the ambassadors have no consideration from these wretches of the Commune. Only last week they shot an *attaché* of the Belgian Embassy, suspected of carrying intelligence to the Versailles folks."

"Well—it was selfish in me to come to disturb you," she said, concealing her face guiltily with her handkerchief; "we'll talk it all over to-morrow. I want to see you the very first thing. Come, selfish sister, let the fugitive get some rest."

But the young man seemed in no hurry to lie down. After luxuriating interminably in the, for some time, unaccustomed joy of the bath, he put on his slippers and wrapper. As he passed the sofa where Bella and Edith had sat, his eye

fell upon an open sheet. He picked it up carelessly, his eye catching the line of the note Trajan had written Bella: "Have no uneasiness about the woman." He started and changed color,—throwing the paper on the floor far from him. All his suspicions, so subtly excited by Theo, came back in a black legion, rousing horror and hatred of the wretched man who was playing with his sister's heart. "Have no uneasiness about the woman?" What woman? Had he learned that Madelaine Tarbes had exposed his odious conduct? He got up and looked at the paper lying at his feet.

Why should he hesitate to read it? It was the evidence of a vile treason, which was to wreck his sister's life, to say nothing of befouling the woman he himself loved. He picked it up, holding it as one holds a thing tainted and infected. The name "Trajan" at the bottom infuriated him. It bore no date. Was it fresh or was it a relic of the early part of the intrigue. He would read it. The first obligation of a brother was the protection of his family honor. He read it. Every line glimmered out like the dancing demons in the pool, reflected from the loathsome serpent's scales. That Bella could be such a wanton, was the thought uppermost in his mind. Edith had but just told him that Trajan had ceased visiting the house lest it might bring suspicion and danger upon the family. This, as the note showed, was a pretext to get rid of her. He had grown weary of simulating a love he no longer felt.

"He is coming in at noon, the scoundrel, but he comes into a house no longer at the mercy of the adventurer," and Elliot ground his teeth in anticipation of the exquisite revenge he was about to take. Was ever such despicable treason heard of! Love might blind a man to desperate expedients, but to invade the house of calamity, to seek the moment when terror and death hung over it—for hadn't Edith and his mother said, they feared he was dead? To take advantage of such a time! Ah, it was base beyond the power of words to speak or vengeance to repay! Should

he summon the household, servants and all, to make his ignominious expulsion more emphatic? Expulsion! He would have the scullion baste him out with dish clouts, and the porter to hale him into the street with the placard, "ingrate and sneak," affixed on his breast as nearest the basest part of him—the heart.

And the longer he kept up these genial reflections, the more vigorous became his muttered expressions of the scorn and fury he was going to heap upon the unconscious victim, who, at that very moment, was holding haggard vigil across the street, his heart torn with anguish as the perils that encompassed his angel and her kin weighed heavily and more heavily on him, while he realized his powerlessness to rescue all of them. I don't know whether Theo would have considered the situation a compliment or not could she have looked into Elliot's heart, festering with wounded self-love, hatred and despair—for after all it must be borne in mind that Elliot's estimate of Trajan's treason had varied, as the influence of the young man on Bella's affections appeared certain or problematical. I think we rather enjoy the sins of our neighbors when they don't touch our pockets and our pride! At least, I know no temple where the ewes of righteousness and the rams of iniquity are divided by perceptible barriers. There was no sleep for the avenger that morning. He walked the floor in a fury, which, by eight o'clock had so exhausted him, that throwing himself on the lounge, he dozed feverishly until eleven. He was nearly dressed when Edith's tap at the door warned him to compose his countenance. She must know nothing of the coming scene.

"Mamma is as cheery as a maid in vacation, and demands your immediate presence in the breakfast-room—why, Elliot, you haven't been in bed!" she exclaimed, as she caught sight of the undisturbed counterpane through the open door.

"No, I napped on the lounge. I was too excited to go to

bed. Come, I'm ready." He hurried her out to avoid saying any thing that might betray him, or hear any thing which might further excite his rage, or possibly for fear the cruel blow coming to her might shake his resolution. He left her at the breakfast-room door, and going into the hall, where the astonished Pierre nearly embraced him in his ecstasy, Elliot said, huskily:

"Mr. Gray, if he comes, is to be shown into the library, instead of the breakfast-room."

The breakfast was a tumult of jubilant reunion. Bella was scintillant with old time pedantries. Mrs. Briscoe, who appeared for the first time in months in her accustomed place, as Kate said, to "honor the fatted calves," was forced to go back to the sofa to explode more at her ease in laughter. The meal was well over when a ring at the door admonished Elliot that the great moment had come. He rose a little nervously as the solemnity of his office of avenger of outraged family honor, impressed itself on him, and went into the hall-way.

"Mr. Gray is in the library, monsieur," Pierre said, beaming with joy, as Elliot held him outside the door.

"Phil," called Elliot, "won't you come with me, I want you a moment."

Every body looked in surprise. Elliot was deadly pale and his voice was hoarse. The hand that held the *portière* trembled. Trajan stood looking out of the window and did not hear the steps of the two as they entered the room behind him. Laying his hand on Philip's arm to check his sudden movement toward Trajan, Elliot spoke in a voice of suppressed excitement.

"Mr. Trajan Gray, when I tell you that I know your entire history as well as your recent treachery, it will not be necessary for me to add that this house is no place for you."

He stopped, not that he had said half that he intended, but because his excitement made him powerless to articulate

more. If Philip had not held him, he might even have fallen. Trajan had turned eagerly at the first sound of Elliot's voice. He had learned from the *concierge* the good news of the arrival, and when Pierre had sent him to the library he felt that Elliot had learned the wrong he had done him and was going to fall on his neck in repentance. He fairly staggered as the graceless, wrong-headed boy spat out these brutal words. For a moment he doubted his ears.

He went close to his accuser, scrutinizing his face with wonder and despair, then realizing that he had heard aright, covered his face with his hands. The gesture smote Elliot. He recalled the same piteous action under the lilacs that May day, when his Quixotic impulse had involved him in all this misery. But as the executor of duty, the avenger of outraged morals, he could not let sentimental weaknesses of this sort intervene. His indignation had, however, fallen from the high pressure stage. When he resumed, all his rhetorical flourishes of contempt and scorn were lost in the conflicting emotions of the scene.

"I repeat and emphasize what I said to you at Crécy. The same roof can never cover you and me, nor you and mine. I request you to leave this house; I forbid you to ever speak or write to any member of my family. I will do you the mercy of keeping from the world what I know of you, and by that tacit compact with vileness, I repay all the offices you have ever rendered me or mine."

"But, I say, Elliot, of what do you accuse Gray? This is certainly a summary way of treating a man," cried Philip, looking in doubt from one to the other.

"He—" Elliot couldn't use the name for hatred. "He knows what I mean and he appreciates, if there is such a thing as recognition in a nature so base, the merciful silence in which his conduct is buried. Come—I can't have you remain in this house; it is a desecration to every thing of purity in it—I can't risk the innocent and betrayed again."

As he was falling into the fine full swing of the invective

that had boiled in him through a night, like "sweltered venom sleeping got"—a diversion of a very striking sort made this tragi-comedy a mere prelude to the drama. In the excitement of the episode, none of the three had marked the ringing of the bell, a short parley in the hall, the agitated rustle of skirts, until all the family came into the room with frightened faces, followed by four bleary patriots trapped out in such faded effulgence as left the spectators in doubt whether they were begrimed marshals of the empire or clowns from the bouffe theater. Ranging themselves in a row before the door, one of them, constituting himself spokesman, read the terms of several decrees of the executive committee of the commune—not a word of which was understood by any one save Trajan—who knew, alas, before the man opened his mouth what the incursion meant.

"Therefore, in virtue of this decree, we arrest the citizen Philip Kent and the citizen Elliot Arden, in obedience to the general committee's mandate."

"Which is the citizen Kent?" asked the voice, majestically.

Philip stepped forward and was taken between the first two of the four gorgeous functionaries.

"*C'est très bien ça, joli garçon tout de même, mais—allons, allons.*"

"Now which is—" and he referred to his list with jaunty deliberation. "Which is the citizen Elliot Arden." He looked from Trajan to Elliot, and from Elliot fastened his eyes on Trajan as the most likely to be the monster denounced in the charge.

"I am Elliot Arden," said Trajan calmly, stepping forward and placing himself between the two remaining effigies of *egalité*.

"*Mais c'est encore fort bien ça—maintenant nous sommes au complet: marchons! mesdames, je vous salue—nom de nom qu'elle est belle—qu'elles sont belles tous deux—mais ces sont des anges.*"

All this time the spectators of this grotesque tragedy stood speechlessly dazed. Edith was mercifully but half aware of its tragic meaning. Bella, who knew it perfectly, lost the sense of its horror in the divine abnegation of the man who, in the amazement of measureless wrong, had made answer to calumny by contemptuously giving the calumniator his life. Bella had heard part of Elliot's hideous apostrophe, for suspecting something dire, but of another sort, when Elliot's pale face startled the breakfast-room, she had gone into the hall to ask Pierre who was in the library; she was passing back to the drawing-room uneasy and half tempted to enter, when the guards appeared. The most miserable culprit, conscious of guilt, who ever received reprieve at the last second of the eleventh hour, never endured the life-time of self-detestation, despair and shame that paralyzed Elliot's faculties as his bitter and terrible gibes were so curtly refuted. He strove to speak, and as Trajan saw what he was about, he interposed, speaking in the English tongue.

"It's useless for you to avow yourself, it would only involve the three of us. Feeling as you feel, believing as you believe, the only protection of these defenseless women is yourself. Edith, for my sake, make him listen to reason. Bella, you have a kind feeling for me I know, be a mother to my darling." But he could not keep up this composed tone. Even the Spartan control that a life-time of bitter ingratitudes and undeserved misconstruction taught him, broke down before the frightened and incredulous glance of the being he loved.

"Oh, Trajan, Trajan, what does it all mean? Elliot, Elliot, speak; say you are Elliot, don't let Trajan go—Shame—" Bella, on an imploring gesture from Trajan, seized her and by force dragged her back, whispering hurriedly:

"It is only for a little time. Trajan can escape, Elliot couldn't. Trajan has friends in the commune—for God's sake, Edith, do not expose the ruse—aunty—mother, come to her." But there was no longer any fear of exposure. A

kinder hand than kin intervened and the troubled little brain was in the grateful rest of unconsciousness.

"Monsieur," Trajan began.

"Citizen Arden, you pain me—there is no more of monsieur in the noble reign of the commune."

"Ah—true—a slip into the superstition of the past. I am about to ask you, citizen, if you would not permit me to embrace the citoyenne—she is my *fiancée*."

"*Mais certainement*—what do you take us for? Kiss all round and we will turn our backs—that is more than is prescribed in the regulations—you can't ask a soldier to bear every thing. What! look at other lips kissing such divinities as these.—Ah, that I were in your lucky shoes—*coquin* that you are!"

Trajan kneeled beside the gracious figure lying on the mother's bosom and reverently pressed the open lips. He clasped the slender form, undulating like a crushed vine in his strong arms and his tears flowed over the lovely face—"Tell her that her love was as the benediction of God to me—tell her that since I have known her, she has never been out of my thoughts by day, nor my dreams by night—tell her that she is not to mourn for me, but when some honest fellow comes, make his life the Heaven she has made mine—tell her——"

"But I say, citizen, you know one can't eternize one's self-denials—come, we must go—"

Elliot started, crying: "No—stay—I have something to say, citizen—I——"

"Citizen, pay no heed to that unhappy young man. He is insane," said Trajan, without looking at him.

"Oh, Elliot, Elliot, for my sake—I shall die, if you go—I, oh—aunty command him to save himself and save us"—and Bella caught him imploringly.

"*Marchons—en avant—houp-la.*"

Elliot half dragging his mother and Bella, made for the departing cortege. "Phil, in God's name speak and don't

let me be disgraced—Phil—I say—soldiers, I am Elliot Arden—the man you have is an impostor—I command you—arrest me—I—ah—mother—Bella—how can you connive at my dishonor—my ignoble baseness?—let me go, I say—what is life worth at such a price—what—" He had freed himself from the pleading, hampering arms, but at the door Kate stood—grim and terrible.

"Ye've played th' fule long eno' for a grown man—have some sense while it's no' too late; th' man ye've reviled's too good to be in the world wi' th' likes o' ye', let him go, where Jezebel can't cross his blameless life."

With an angry wrench, he whirled Cerberus from the door and was in the vestibule—the sound of the soldiers' steps had died out. He seized the door, and though he pulled with the force of madness, it did not yield. Trajan had caused the soldiers to lock it on the outside, fearing the "madman" might attempt to follow. Elliot began to believe himself that he was a madman. What, the basest of mankind had as coolly as though changing a glove from one hand to the other, stepped forward, while he was thinking only of himself, and placed his neck in the halter!

Yes, he must be mad. He fell upon the sofa near the hat-rack and as the sobbing women gathered about him, gazed fixedly at each in turn. Yes, it was his mother. It was Bella, it was Kate and there too, frightened and bewildered, the kind old face of Pierre. What did it mean? Had his suffering and suspense during the last weeks turned his brain, as Trajan, with the cold emphasis of an examining specialist had said?

Yes, he must be a chattering madman; if not, how could he have been so misled. He exulted in the thought. He was not a weak, credulous dolt, the plaything of a cruel and wicked devil—yes—yes—he whispered to himself, staring vacantly at the sobbing trio—insane—God be praised, insane and not the hateful wretch he thought, when Trajan—with never a look or thought for Bella or any one else whatsoever in the

world he was giving up to let him live, had caressed the lifeless form of Edith. But where was Edith. He started —surely every body in this fatal house was insane.

He flew to where the child still lay prone upon the floor—forgotten—no—Mrs. Briscoe was holding the fair head and the bonne stood weeping by her side. She was opening her violet eyes. She saw her brother's face and smiled. She tried to raise herself, but the effort was beyond her. She was in his arms now, and he kissed her fondly, much as her mother might, whispering to himself—"Insane—insane. God be praised, insane." But a sudden thought gave quick strength to Edith. She unlocked her arms and looking up in her mother's face asked confidingly:

"Mamma, invite Trajan to come in, Elliot is sorry that he was cruel to him—Elliot wants me to ask forgiveness of him for the great wrong——"

Elliot rose like a flash. "My God, mother, am I mad, or am I in a dream—for God's sake tell me?"

"My son, you have gone through a most painful ordeal. You have given life and happiness to all of us; you have done under most grievous temptation the sublimest duty a man can do. You have made a noble sacrifice of self to save your sister's, your mother's and Bella's happiness, perhaps life." She folded him in her arms as she spoke. His head fell upon her shoulder and there was a solemn silence in the room. Bella had replaced her mother by Edith's side, who sat staring in wonder at the mother and son.

"Where is Trajan," she asked quite composedly.

No one knew what to answer. Bella kissed her, but she pushed her head gently aside and looked square at Elliot.

"Neddy, where is Trajan, I'm sure he was here a moment since, where did he go. Please tell him I want him!"

Elliot put his mother softly from him and coming over to his sister, picked her up bodily and carried her to her room. He asked his mother to watch over her, and touching her forehead with his lips, said tenderly:

"Trajan shall come to you—I promise you. Bella, will you come with me?" and as the others who had followed silently looked in anguish after him, he added: "Have no fear. I shall not quit the house to-day." When he had reached the library again, and Bella stood beside him, he took Trajan's crumpled note from his pocket and handing it to her said:

"Bella, what does this mean?"

She looked at the note, then at her interrogator in bewilderment.

"Where did you get that?"

"I found it where you were sitting in my room last night, or rather this morning; explain it!"

"That's easy enough, I declare I don't see how it needs explanation. It was written in answer to one from me last night, and alluded to a dreadful creature that came here inquiring for you." As she said this, for the first time a suspicion of the *concierge's* inference that there might have been something between Elliot and the woman came into her mind. At this humiliating thought she glanced away from him and sank limply into a chair. He followed her, piercing her with his blue eyes—all steel, now that Bella's confusion confirmed his worst suspicions.

"But what does it mean about signals and suspense, and keeping Edith in the dark?"

Still unsuspicious of the intent of his queries she narrated all that had happened since his departure. Trajan's solicitude by night and day. His efforts to get news to Versailles or from there. His tender thoughtfulness that the danger of their situation might not be suspected by Edith, her mother or Mrs. Arden. His watch from the mansard by night and day. His final note announcing that he had perfected a plan of escape.

"Oh, Bella, what a miserable driveling fool I've been. Do you know that I ordered that man out of this house in terms that would have made a monk a murderer."

"What! The man who risked his life to get you from danger at Meaux? The man who bore with patience the calumnious innuendoes of—of—a heartless woman at Crécy? Ah, Elliot, I am ashamed to see you living before me, and an hour ago I thought I could not live to see you in danger of death."

She shrunk from him—even pushing the chair to put a greater distance between them. He made no attempt to follow. He fell into an abstraction—incoherent—vapid. He had no longer a faculty of thinking left. He had arrived at that most pitiable of all mental crises—when a man shrinks from looking at his own mind. He realized in a sort of exoteric way that his intellect no longer served him. That he couldn't trust it.

"And knowing all this, you let me go on blindly in the dark, forcing myself to hate a man I loved? Oh—Bella—Bella—"

"Knowing all what? That you were misreading a chivalrous nature born generations too late to be understood? That you were taking the malicious hints of an unfeeling coquette, rather than the evidences of your own eyes and ears? Could a man whose soul was not sanctified by the love of truth, whose heart was not brave with the courage of purity, endure what he endured at Crécy—stand in utter forgetfulness of self to save a woman he hardly even knew, while the woman he adored kneeled fainting in sight of him? If the love of the wicked woman leads the feet to hell, it steeps the brain in a deadening potion. And you didn't even have the generosity to know the hand that cut your cords in the prison at Meaux? No congenial instinct told you on reading that note, that this martyr was risking his life day and night, that no knowledge of danger might come to you and yours?"

She had risen as these impetuous and withering reproaches poured from her lips, her eyes blazing, her nostrils quivering! "Oh, Elliot—my kinsman—if you are not as wicked as you

are weak—you will now act like a man. You will place Edith, my mother, yours and Kate in security and you will join me in saving the life of this man among dolts. But aside from the vindication of your own compromised manhood, his death will kill Edith. You must save his life to save hers."

Elliot, who had sat listlessly, as if only half conscious of this frank analysis of his claims to manliness, rose quite deliberately and taking Bella's hands in both his own asked in the most tranquil voice in the world :

"Bella, do you love Trajan Gray ?"

She looked him straight in the eye, her head imperiously erect, her dark eyes scintillating with almost arrogant triumph.

"I adore Trajan Gray ; I have adored him since the moment, half dead, torn and bleeding, ignoring me as if I had been a clod, he endured the agonies of the stake to assure himself that the woman he loved was safe. I have adored him each hour that I saw him consecrating every thought of his life, every dream of his future to the woman he loved. I adore him more than ever now as I see him standing there, the scar of your intolerable wrong upon his pure heart, and giving up his own life that the woman he loved might keep her brother, her mother and her cousin in unity. I adore him as I adore a divine creature that an earthly heart may not dream of possessing."

"Does Trajan know this ?"

"Does the sun know that mankind delights in it? No—I have never by word, look or sign given him a hint of this idolatry. An idolatry as far removed from the passion of love, as the instinct of religion from the sham of worship. I feel purified and ennobled in the thought that I have read him aright. I have been educated in every virtue in watching the outgrowth of his pure, tender, immeasurable love for the woman of all women fitted to mate with him. The happiness in store for Edith was only less joy to me than to

her. I would willingly sacrifice all that is dearest to me to see them standing at the altar." She came close to him as she added, "You don't understand this. You think that a woman's heart is so small a vessel that it can contain but one process of action? I should adore Trajan Gray all my life if he lived, I shall worship his memory all my life—but if he were here and heart-free, I could never love him with the love I mean to give my husband."

"And who is that husband to be?" Elliot asked, still in the curious calm in which he had inaugurated this extraordinary courtship. Bella's eyes fell; all her imperiousness was gone. She was gentle as Edith, and even more timid. She strove to release the two hands held imprisoned.

"That's a very unusual question for any one but a mother to ask."

"You are an unusual girl and I want you to answer."

"Suppose I say I don't know?"

"Then I shall know you are not telling the truth."

But the truth, whatever it was to be, lay hidden at the bottom of the well, which the future only was to bring to the surface; for while Bella's eye was resuming its imperious gleam, Kate appeared.

"Here's a letter for you, Elliot. The messenger won't go without your receipt for it—written in your own hand and in his presence. He is waiting at the *concierge's* desk."

When Elliot had gone from the room Kate, looking at Bella keenly, said sententiously, as though the remark were the corollary of a preceding series of propositions.

"She'll die if harm comes to Trajan. It's a love, not of the sort you masterfu' young women feel—all her soul and heart are in it. It's part o' her religion. Are ye goin' to tie Elliot to yer futstool while the poor lad is going till his death yonder?"

"I have given Elliot to understand that Trajan's death will outlaw him from even his mother's heart. God forgive me, I think I have been as harsh and cruel to him as he has

beeñ brutal and unjust to Trajan—but Kate you must not blame the poor fellow too much ; he—he heard, that is he believed—he thought—that—that Trajan—was in love with me—and that I knew it and shared it."

"Th' bletherin' eejiot," was Kate's expository comment.

"Don't be too hard on the poor fellow ; he was made to believe it by some one—who—we can guess."

"Ay, I can well guess, that lineal rib of Endor—th' bane o' this house, sence the first moment her idolatrous heel rested on its threshold ! And let me say sin' I'm dealing in th' truth for th' time—ye're no without shame yersel' in this braw business. Yer foolish pride and canniness held th' lad awa frae ye and gave his claymore in th' hands o' Jezebel. If ye had let him see, what a' th' rest of us saw—what Jezebel herself saw—he would never ha' given himsel' to her wicked tricks. But he's been well workit for it, though his sins be heavy, and worse than all, his punishment touches the innocent and leal. Ye maun brace him to do a mon's duty, for his own sake, his sister's sake and ye're ain—for ye'd no prize a mon that gave his best friend over to th' headsman, or ye're never the noble spirit I've held ye."

"Kate, you are a creature of diabolical prejudices. Elliot has been greatly misguided, but," forgetting her own recent vehemence with delicious inconsequence, "he is neither weak nor frivolous. He has not been the dupe of the designing person you allude to. I've no doubt her preference flattered him and he thought himself bound to respond. How could any girl help loving a nature so frank, a soul so loyal as Elliot's ? Have you ever seen a man that could be compared with him ? He hasn't Trajan's saint-like patience, nor his penetration; his very faults emphasize the winning graces of his character ; all truth and directness himself, he is made the victim of every indirection practiced upon him, simply because he is incapable of imagining the foulness of the ignoble, or the false in others. You will see him redeem his errors now I pledge myself for it ! "

"I shall believe it when I see it and not till then," said Kate, a little skeptically. "I've heard his pledges before. He swore to me in London when his wickedness had set him under th' very clods of th' grave, that he'd be a different man and see Jezebel no more. How long did he hold th' oath? Th' first minute he was able to stir out he was at her side and came home like a maniac blazing with new diviltries, sh'd put him up to. I'll believe in his sense when I see him well married to some girl that has head enough for twa. I'm no sayin' it's heart th' lad wants. He has eno' for a dozen, but he's prone to th' first fool counsel that falls on his ear."

"Not a flattering character, that, Kate; who is the luckless victim?" said Elliot, entering from the sleeping room.

"A lad in a fairy story I once read, to whom his fairy godmother gave all th' gifts, but judgment. He ruled a kingdom of adoring fules, and took hawks, bats and blind men for his councilors."

"And did he reign long?"

"No, the bats and birds of prey drove off or devoured all th' true friends, and whoever loved or trusted him were beheaded or alienated, and he was devoured by th' hawks when he no longer had leal friends to defend him."

"A lugrubrious fable, Kate; what does it teach?"

"The danger of doves taking counsel of hawks; of lambs bleating th' howl of th' wolf; of truth blindin' its e'en and letting craft lead it."

"Kate, you rival Lafontaine; he made animals talk, but you make them preach—Fables of the Conventicle as it were. But we must be at more important work just now. Trajan and Philip must be snatched from the jaws of the monster, and I must do it." He looked at Bella with a curious sort of implicitness, as if he had some assurance that this self-devotion was to have the reward of her love. She had not said it. He had not asked it. Was it really true? Had they come to the end of parting and caprice? Had Bella

come to the end of her wild strange ways and was the real to replace the ideal in her wayward heart? Ah, satiric imp, that sits the saddle, riding our hearts whither you list, did you laugh or weep at this incongruous picture? Were the reins fallen from your trembling hands and were the steeds of these two natures running whither they listed? Were they to canter over green fields and by purling brooks and find blooming pasture and untroubled life?

And as the "adored" Trajan tramped silently along with Philip under the mild April sunshine, through ranks of jeering patriots, buffeting, striking and spitting—the hatred of the elect upon the defiled foe—to the altar of the people's sacrifice, the tabernacle of vengeance and blood, the prison of the Grand Roquette, whose ministering furies eagerly waited the sacrificial tokens; and while his sweetheart lay delirious in the darkened chamber yonder,—was the course of this true love to be long clogged, darkened, and its trace often wholly lost like the mysterious stream that "ran measureless to man down to a sunless sea," or to flow, broad, uninterrupted and serene in the sunlight and under the stars never again to be broken or checkered by ripple or cloud? Why not? The bells that ring in the orange odors, or the babe that's born, sound as well for the clay that is carrying to the narrow pit, there; the tears of joy and the tears of woe spring from the same source!

Why should it seem sinister that Trajan's death sentence should be the signal of his friend's felicity? Don't we see these conditions daily? Pray, madame, rustling in your silks and laces, did it make you any less proud and imperious the other night when you received that glorious robe of lace and China silk, to see the sunken eye and pallid cheek of Susan the seamstress, who fell dead on your kitchen stair, with a few dollars, the price of weeks of toil, jingling in her tightly clutching fingers? Or, sir, with your millions, do you drink a single drop less of the cup of adulation, that the water in your stock drowned a score of widows and drove helpless

men to the pistol? And why blame or even moralize? Is not the passion of mating the strongest in us? Why then break the golden bowl, because one lip the less is to drink the potion? At sea when hunger overtakes the castaway in the long boat, lot makes a man's friend his food. Some must die! Some must live!

Elliot, however, felt deeply the anguish of his situation. He had gained no promise; but he had gained the force of a great impulse. He owned with a sense of inexpiable guilt, that he was coming to his own with a fratricidal hand and not by the natural laws of selection or heredity. He shrank from thinking at all, as he saw the vision of his happiness, over the dead body of his wronged friend. If he did not snatch him from self-imposed death, he would expiate his wrong by dying with him, if he could not die for him. He thought of the strange destiny that had first brought them face to face; he had saved him from self-death, only to drive him to suicide in the end.

If we had not followed this young man's mental processes before and seen his fine resolutions dissolved like wafers in the wine, we might look forward to heroic work, to cap the climax of all we have thus far seen. But we are justified in skepticism when we recall the wondrous potency of those emerald eyes, the irresistible seduction of the wit that Theo never exerted in vain. Now the realities before the lovers were of the sternest sort. The summary decree of the commune had called for Arden as a spy, an accomplice of Philip Kent, an emissary of the Prussian allies at Versailles. Even had they been indifferent to Trajan's fate, his taking off would not secure Elliot's safety. The first thing to be done was to warn the servants that Elliot Arden was no longer to be spoken of as existing. The next to devise means to secure the family from visitations of the agents of the commune. Then Elliot would be free to devise Trajan's rescue.

He was not much known in the quarter, as he had always kept rooms over the river. He prudently colored his blonde

locks as near black as the most powerful dyes could make them, stained his face to a Nubian brown, changed the elegance of his apparel for a more student-like carelessness, and reappeared in the family group, an ebon shade of his golden self. Kate only was taken into the lovers' confidence, as from certain twitches about that sly person's mouth, when the young people met her in leaving the library, Bella conjectured that hers was the rustle that rescued her from the embarrassment of an answer. Edith was still happily but half conscious of the bolt that had struck her, and the anxious ministry had the night before them to prepare a plan of operations. Bella proved the most inventive of the three. Her florid imagination had the quality of concentrating when she came to devise action, and when the trio separated, Elliot felt equal to the work assigned him by his colleagues.

While these perverse symptoms were fermenting in the people we have been studying in these pages, belying all our preconceptions of them, where were Trajan and the luckless Philip? Were they too taking on the color and breaking put in the mental rash, that seems to have affected all who came within the scope of this social and political euthanasia? Had terror transformed the contained doctrinaire of the rights of man, as remorse had metamorphosed his whimsical friend? Was he like Theo prey to the tortures that self-confessed maladroitness had reduced the most inveterate self-confidence and faculty to?.

Is there really a reserve of strength to support the spirit of the just doer in adversity? If so, why do we see the purest and most spotless of her sex stretched broken in heart and mind in the cloistered splendor of the Ardens, while the dismal *salon* of the Bellechasse is agog with the impish spirit of Theo's babbling gayety? I firmly believe that true conscious honor is a coat of gauze, wherethrough every arrow of meanness and malignity penetrates, while impudence, selfishness, greed and all unloveliness, uncleanness

and baseness, are panoplied in the triple armor of the mail of indifference, impenetrable to the law of justice, ideal or actual.

Elliot, who certainly sins through impulse and wrongs through skillfully fed prejudice, can think of lovemaking while the ghastly figure of death to those near and dear to him almost jostles the clothes of the grave about him! Theo, in the wreck of her far-reaching schemes, claps on the cap and bells and makes merry in the great house yonder. While Trajan, guiltless in every thing but a dog-like devotion to the three or four people he has enshrined in his foolish heart, is buffeted in the streets and maltreated in the temples of the gods he had himself invoked, and thinks only of how he may make his sacrifice a redemption for those in peril!

Indeed, as I have told you from the first, there would be no occasion to write this history, had Trajan been a young man of well ordered circumspection. He held that society needed reconstruction! And so here the reconstruction was come and he was the first to find himself discarded from the new life. He had preached the communism of equal political duties! His acolytes had carried the doctrine to the buccaneer principle of equal division of property. He had maintained the right of the majority to rule! His pupils had enforced its right to misrule. He had plead the wrong, the iniquity of human execution, by the individual or the state! His disciples were enforcing a *lex talionis* more sweeping than the absolutism of all the divinely anointed slaughterers from Dionysius to Bonaparte.

The prisoners were first halted in the barracks of the Carrousel, where the guards, falling into drink, forgot them a whole day. The companies being ordered to the forts, the captors made another start, but meeting cronies in the Rue de Rivoli, they locked the "bandits" in a neighboring préfecture and indulged in another spree. Trajan indulged hopes of slipping from these easy-going patriots, when on

the third day, they were summoned to go to the Hotel de Ville to confront the Committee of Public Safety.

Trajan kept up his spirits to encourage Philip and even went to the extent of making merry over his own plight in the revolution he had preached since he knew Paris. Nor did he admit regret for his undisciplined enthusiasm, as the gaudy guardsmen hurried them through clamoring citoyens and citoyennes to the Hotel de Ville, where the Central Committee were to adjudge their guilt. The guards were far kinder than the patriots who ran in groups to see the "bandits of Thiers" pass. Many a time the wretched prisoners were seized and dragged from their protecting captors, before, almost in tatters, their faces bleeding and their bodies bruised, they were hurried toward the great court of the Hotel de Ville. The bloody ordeal was not, however, without a compensating chance. At the corner of the Boulevard Sebastopol, where they came upon a dense mass of the male and female soldiery of the patriots, an onset by an Amazon group, attracted an officer of the general staff riding toward the Hotel de Ville. In spite of his profuse trappings and theatrical plumes, Trajan recognized him, and as a large limbed *vengeresse* of the People fairly twisted his neck awry, with the vigorous wrench she gave his hair, he succeeded in giving the astonished officer the old society signal. Drawing his sword, he rode into the *melée*, scattering the shrieking demi-reps right and left.

"*Nom de Dieu—Mon ami*, what does this mean?" It was Belcour, and he recognized Trajan through the blood and tatters.

"Can you not come to the hearing? We are going to the executive committee—I will explain after we get out of the clutches of these furies." Réné nodded. Then standing up in his stirrups, he shouted:

"*Mes concitoyens*, you are wronging one of the first patriots of the *patrie*—the destroyer of Bonaparte—one of the Treize-Treize."

The crowd fell away hurrahing and the group moved on. Before reaching the door, Réné who had dismounted, was apprised of all Trajan thought prudent to tell. He gave little hope of being able to extricate his old friend from the peril, but pressing his hand as he mounted and rode on ahead, he protested his devotion. To Trajan's great surprise Réné met the guard at the door, with a group of cavalrymen. He was himself quite transformed in the few minutes he had been in the building. The conducting party were halted at the general office on the ground floor, where Réné himself coming forward, asked:

"Citoyen, who are these?"

"Spies arrested by order of the Committee of Public Safety."

"The papers?"

"Here they are—*voici* the spy Kent, this man—and the spy Arden, this man."

"Citoyen, you have done well, you may return to your quarter, the committee shall know your service."

Réné disappeared in the bureau, directing the cavalrymen to guard the prisoners. He returned in a few minutes, and beckoning an orderly, gave him a written order, with which the man disappeared into one of the rear courts. The first captors had marched off, evidently very glad to be quit of their detail, and when the orderly presently reappeared with a squad of six infantrymen, Trajan, Philip and Réné were left alone in the court, the cavalrymen dispersed in chattering groups by the doorway, watching the evolutions of the Amazons in the "Place."

"*Caporal*," said Réné, addressing the leader of the squad, "these are the suspects, Malfoy and Légare," and he looked meaningly at each prisoner as he pronounced these names. "They are to be detained at La Grande Roquette until their crimes can be examined." He handed the corporal the papers, and with a gleam of encouragement in his eye turned and entered the bureau again.

"What does this mean?" asked Philip, gloomily. "Roquette is the *dépôt des condamnés*; are we to be butchered without even the farce of a trial?"

"It is just to evade the farce of a trial Réné has managed this clever device. Don't you see we enter the prison under names against which no one has made complaint? We may lie there until this infernal business is brought to an end, but the danger of a charge against us is removed. Don't forget you are citizen Malfoy and I am citizen Légare. What a trump the small Réné is; I never would have credited him with so ready a resource. By George, he's worth a dozen of his mad-headed compatriots. I despair of ever comprehending French character. Here is this Réné, rattle-head, mercurial; lazy as dead water, as he himself would put it, forever knocking around the quarter, turning out bits of color in a morning that would madden Fortuny or Diaz; dancing all night with fragile *camarades* at the Bal Bullier, the most vehement in the political clubs, living only for pleasure. Yet you can see him here managing this affair with the inspiration and audacity of a *mouchard!*"

Philip wasn't in the mood of this sort of abstraction, and the two marched rapidly, better protected by the more numerous guards. In the Place de la Bastille, whose great octagonal limits bristled like a fortress, the *sans culottes* of the St. Antoine quarter were holding a *fête*. A group of wretched priests were in the center of a ring, baited by jeering women and small boys in indescribable costume. A burly tambouriniere, striking up a carmagnole, the priests were bidden to dance. Refusing, the women darted upon them with knives, scissors, bodkins—jabbing their bared heads and through the rents of their torn soutanes. Finding it impossible to move their tormentors to pity, the priests fell upon their knees resignedly, and clasping their hands before their eyes, their lips could be seen moving in prayer.

Unmoved by this saintly resignation, the demi-reps flung themselves upon them; the last that Trajan saw of the scene

reminding him of a sacred Laocoön writhing in the torments of a score of demoniac hydra. Both prisoners shuddered as the cortège drew up in the court of La Roquette—the *dépôt des condamnés* in time of order. The prison is separated into two parts by the Rue de la Roquette, the frowning mass on the left devoted to boy convicts and that on the right to those sentenced to the guillotine, or the hulks. After a short formality the prisoners were received by the gaoler, Le Français, under their new names and marched through the massive walls into a circular court. Here a group of turnkeys came forward, and the numbers of their cells being called out the prisoners were marched up a broad stairway, impenetrable walls frowning upon four sides of them.

At the top of the wide staircase they came into a great corridor with iron grated cells on either hand. The place was well lighted from above. At the opposite end a cylinder stairway led down to the interior of a separate court where the condemned were led to make the *toilette de la mort.* Most of the cage-like compartments were already occupied, the newcomers receiving pitying glances from hollow eyes, deep-set in pallid faces. On the first landing Trajan and Philip were committed to a gray-haired, not unkindly man, who, taking two keys from the board hanging on the wall, led his new guests down the passage to cells 23 and 25. An iron bedstead fastened to the wall, a single stool and a small round table with the surface of a breakfast tray, were the only furniture of the apartment. Both men were worn out and slept with a restfulness only known to the exhausted, for twelve hours.

The lights were glimmering dimly in the corridor when Trajan awoke, puzzled by his surroundings. The measured tramp of the guard brought him back to the reality, and he started to count the chances of escape. They were far from inviting. Deep upon deep of solid frowning masonry bare of iron, nothing in the remotest degree suggestive of a tool or weapon. He followed the movements of the sentinel mechan-

ically, and then resolving to let no detail evade him, gave his mind to studying the internal economy of the place. In the morning at 5:30 wine and bread were brought in wooden bowls. At noon a wholesome broth, with vegetables and a morsel of bread. The guard, he remarked, was changed every hour, and once in each twelve hours there was a sort of liberation; some of the prisoners marching off with a lightness of step denoting belief in freedom.

Others were liberated, but it could be seen that none of the elation of hope buoyed their trembling steps, while muffled sounds of musketry inside the walls told but too plainly the liberty that had been given them. Even the poor comfort of talking with Philip, save during the short liberation of an hour each day, was denied him. News from the troubled city was vague and contradictory. One guard, in enthusiasm, would announce a great triumph of the patriots and the immediate capture of Versailles, with ferocious threats of a general massacre to signalize this crowning evidence of the People's prowess. But the old guardian of the corridor passing along took care to make known that the army of MacMahon was girdling the city closer and closer and routing Dombrowski's tatterdemalions in every encounter.

The third day of the ordeal brought a great influx to the dungeons. The cell of Mazas had been emptied and the unfortunate wretches sent to La Roquette to be shot for communards in the hands of the "bandits." As the cells were unequal to the arrivals the prisoners were, in some instances, doubled. Trajan, to whose lot it fell to have a companion thrust upon him, asked the new guard if he might not be put in 25 with his compatriot. "We are Americans," he said, "and the *patrie* can not suffer in gratifying this demand."

"By Jove," said a voice in English. "Americans are you; well, I thought I had hard lines, but I see I'm in luck. I'll see what I can do."

Gibson, for it was he, went to the person in command, and

his statement was listened to with favor, for Trajan saw the old guardian coming forward with the new friend. It was almost like liberty to be with Philip, and for the rest of the day the two friends were content and even happy. The Englishman seized the chance to tell them that it looked bad for the commune. MacMahon had carried all the outer forts, and unless very unlucky, must make a breach in the walls soon. Animated by this news, at once good and bad, the prisoners almost cheered the stout Englishman, who moved off in great terror. The next morning Trajan got further chance of talking with him and learned of his encounter with Grovel.

"What! Lafayette in the ranks?" he exclaimed.

"You know him?" asked Gibson in delight. "Tell me where he lives; I have a confounded packet for him that has worried my life out, since it is more precious than gold to the family."

Trajan gave him the address, and when he rejoined Philip told him of the singular chance that had thrown the whilom companion of Lafayette into their way. It was just after the supper had been served that a commotion was heard at the end of the hall. Two officers with the broad red sash of the commune were coming along the corridor with the old guardian. The hearts of many a poor wretch sank at the sight. To the horror of our two friends, the group came to a halt before 25. The key grated harshly in the lock.

"The citizens Malfoy and Légare will step forth," said one of the sashed figures. Trajan, who was nearest, came out first, pale, but collected. Philip followed as firmly, but not less pale.

"Citizen patriots," resumed the red sash, a boy of twenty-three or four, "I felicitate you. The member of the Committee of Public Safety, Belcour, vouches for your patriotism and has laid the proofs before the committee that you are calumniated. The *patrie* gives you liberty and assigns you to staff duty with the General Roesel. I salute you. Here

are your commissions, you will get an order for uniforms at the general staff, Place Vendôme."

Free! rescued! Not death, but life. The Saxons edified the Gaul by a simultaneous impulse. They gave each other a hug, perhaps as much to save the need of speech as to demonstrate their grateful, devout thanksgiving. But in the intoxication of this sudden release they were betrayed into a blunder which, had the young patriots been keener or more suspicious, would have undone the fine work of Réné. They addressed each other as Philip and Trajan. No one noticed the exclamation save Gibson, to whom, of course, the English accents were more intelligible than to the others.

Trajan was just about to thank the Englishman for his good-fellowship when he remembered the danger and walked on with only a glance of recognition. Philip, not so prudent, lingered to shake his hand, but instead Gibson slipped the packet of letters into it and whispered to give it to Grovel. None saw the maneuver but the eager spectators in the cells, and they were to be depended on as against the patriots. The soft April night was like May as the strangely liberated pair passed down the gloomy stairs, under the frowning granite walls of the quadrangle, where a long line of miserable, haggard victims stood in the ordeal they had so recently endured. There was another embrace, heartier than the first, when they stood on the dim street, the high walls of the prison on either hand.

They had been ordered to present themselves at once in the staff office, and warned that they were in danger so long as they were not uniformed. This they discovered before they had gone a quarter of a mile. As they emerged under the lights in the Place de la Bastille a demonstrative patrol brought them to a halt, and it was only upon explaining their *rôle* and displaying their commission, printed in blood-red ink with a lurid goddess in the corner, that they were grumblingly permitted to pursue their venturesome way. They avoided danger thereafter by walking in the

middle of the streets, crowded with picturesquely-clad vivandieres, soldiers and ragamuffins, dancing, shouting and reveling in a wild orgie of delirious joy—for it was reported that MacMahon was a prisoner and would be shot at La Roquette in the morning. When they came to barricades, of which there were scores in the Bastille quarter, built with the solidity and precision of earthworks, they were obliged to pass the guards, but their red commission carried them through in safety.

In the Place Vendôme they found Roesel, the new general-in-chief, a pale, handsome, poet-like lad not thirty. He was surrounded by a gesticulating group of bedizened personages screaming and imploring instant compliance with their demands. One wanted an order for re-enforcements; another couldn't answer for his post unless he had five thousand troops; another had no food, the commissariat having sold his rations to the speculators. It was two hours before the tortured chieftain could look at the two strangers assigned him as staff officers.

His face flushed with pleasure as he saw that they were of a different stamp from the wild and ignorant cattle assigned his predecessor.

"Citizens, I welcome you with pleasure. It is no light duty devolves upon you. Have you ever served before?" Both young men bowed.

"*A la bonne heure*—that is something like it. Which is the citizen Malfoy?" Philip bowed—"*Très bien*—citizen, you shall remount and direct the formation of the cavalry of which we are badly in need, and you, citizen Légare—you shall be my adjutant." He rang a bell. An orderly approached the desk and the citizen delegate for war ordered him to conduct the citizen to the store house, handing him at the same time a written order. "Citizen, there isn't a moment to lose. You must be prepared to aid me all night in disposing of these documents. We mean now to show the enemy scientific war."

"He's no fool, that," said Philip—"if the commune had made use of such material from the first, Thiers would now find himself behind the Loire—where, as it is, with dunderheads and maniacs in control here, he was half determined to go when the storm burst in March."

"Who is Roesel?"

"He is an ex-officer in the army, one of the most accomplished graduates of the Polytechnique. Served with distinction in Algiers, and like yourself indulged in theories which don't work well in practice."

"It's not my theories, oh, graceless Philistine, that are working here, but the perversion of them. You might as well call the gentle creed of the Nazarene bloody and cruel because of St. Bartholomew, of Alva, of Wallenstein, of the Thirty-Years' war, of the Inquisition, of deluged England, as to say these maniacs, who borrow the most generous and pacific doctrines, represent the glorious creed of common rights, common responsibilities, common destinies—for that is the crime of communism."

"Well, Gray, I'm prepared to take the doctrines on trust, but I decline to be an apostle."

"Yes, that's the pusillanimity that subjects society to these shoals, and this is only the preliminary one, let me tell you—for the work that the educated shrink from, the masses are bound to undertake, and lacking knowledge and harmony, they stumble blindly, commit woeful blunders, but they succeed in the end—witness the liberty given the world by the horrors of '93!"

"Well, well, have it so—like Gambetta, you were born to die in the skin of a *revoltée*—but I own that I am not easy in my mind in this business. I am an aid on L'Admirault's staff and when the other side get the upper hand, as they are bound to, I shall be shot."

"You can readily prove that you had no choice—and then you may find a chance to escape. I think, we are the children of miracle, as the Legitimists call the Count de

Chambord, and for my part I never was so little disposed to look awry at fortune. All that worries me now is to get a chance to send a message to the Rue François Premier, where they are giving you up as dead, I fear."

"They would not be so much troubled about me, if they thought you safe—"

"Oh, Kent, that's not generous—it's damnably cruel—you have no business to talk that way even in joke," and Trajan with quite unnecessary wrath dropped his companion's arm.

"By the Lord, Gray, you're a fine fellow—you misapprehend me. Do you suppose Elliot can feel very happy, knowing that you gave yourself into the lion's jaws, just at the moment, too, when he was acting like an infernal dunce and ingrate? By heavens, I don't understand how you resisted knocking his stupid head off. I should have done it. I couldn't imagine what he was driving at, for I never understood your quarrel, and I didn't recall that he was ignorant of the part you played in his escape from Meaux."

"I didn't have the slightest disposition to lay a hand on the misguided lad; first, because I love him; second, because some one else loves him with a love far surpassing the love sisters give brothers; third, because, though the voice was the voice of Elliot, the words were the words of a revengeful, heartless woman."

The orderly begged the citizens to go to the dépôt at this point. They entered a great magazine, where hundreds of clerks were busy filling orders for raiment, which could hardly be called uniforms. Not till the orderly had gone back twice and finally returned with a peremptory command were the civilians transformed into such militaires as we are accustomed to see in the antics of General Boum in the piebald army of La Grande Duchesse. The sun was shining into the litter of the headquarters, revealing a scene of characteristic disorder, when the young general, dead tired, bade his aids seek a few hours rest and be with him at ten o'clock. But there was no rest for the overjoyed aids.

In ten minutes they were hurrying across the Place de la Concorde—a scene of wreck and destruction—towards the stately allés of the Champs Élysées a-bloom in early May, green, musical with the chirp of the robins, and tranquil as the river that flowed from the shambles above to the shambles below. At last, with an eagerness that almost stopped the beating of their hearts they stood before the heavy doors guarding all they both loved best in the world.

CHAPTER XXXV.

IN THE LION'S MOUTH.

ELLIOT set about his campaign with all the attention to detail that marks the inspired amateur in the serious affairs of life. Since he was no longer Arden, his first sagacious move, as I have said, was to color his blonde pate a dingy black. His skin even was darkened, and when he appeared before his solicitous conspirators, they owned that he never would be identified as the glorious Saxon the world knew him. He proposed, first of all, finding the whereabouts of the prisoners and then, if he could not invoke the interposition of some of Trajan's old club friends in the quarter, compel the aid of the United States minister. If all else failed, he would go before the Executive Committee with the minister and avow the substitution of Gray for himself. This last resolution, however, he did not confide to the other plotters, who staked all on his persuasive powers with the Draconian Committee.

But before he had taken a step in this promising programme an ominous event happened. He had received a letter from an unknown (to him) citoyen, signed Céleste Voyon, in which this patriot informed him that, as soon as her duties in the field gave her the leisure, she would do herself the honor to call and make him acquainted with a matter of the first im-

portance to his family. He had heedlessly signed the receipt for the letter and thereby given his identity into the hands of one of the children of the People. What was to be done?

The next morning Elliot set out, cautioning the anxious family to have no fears if he did not return at night; perhaps, indeed, he might be forced to remain away several days, as he was going to persist, by himself, if the minister had not traced the victims. At the legation he was solemnly assured that no prisoners Kent or Arden were in possession of the commune. Knowing the impossibility of the French to pronounce Saxon names, agents had been sent to the prisons where all suspects, or hostages, were confined, but no names, even remotely resembling those he sought, were to be found.

They must either have escaped *en route* the day of their arrest, or they were dead. This was the conclusion of the official, to whom Elliot had given *carte blanche* as to funds in tracing his friends. His high hopes were dashed, for, like impulsive natures, the rebound from hope carried him far from the alternative of escape suggested by the official. What should he do now? he asked himself despairingly. Sullenly resolved to keep away from home until the worst or best was known, he drove to the prison Mazas. Naturally, without an order of any kind, he was refused admission. Hurrying back to the legation he got a letter to Raoul Rigault, the head of the Safety Committee and chief of police, made out in the name of Trajan—resolved that, if he found him, he would give him the order and let him pass out, risking his chance to liberate himself and Philip. Absolutely, the madness in the air from which no one in the city seems to have been preserved during those nine crazy, tumultuous weeks—possessed him. The absurdity of his scheme never even suggested itself to him as he tore off like a maniac to thrust his head into the jaws of the wild beast, that no one came near during the horrid revel

without losing blood or head. It was late in the afternoon, when he at last got track of the "Delegate of Public Safety" as the arch-butcher in the tragedy was magniloquently styled in the flamboyant literature of this saturnalia.

His headquarters were in the long low range of medieval gables which used to be the wonder and delight of the meditative sightseer on the banks of the Seine. Elliot could hardly reconcile this peaceful bit of Nuremburg-like gables and flying dormers with the bloody lair of the chief of the assassins. After a moment's wait, the messenger who had taken his letter beckoned him to follow, and, entering a vestibule crowded with tearful expectants, he was led past them all into an inner department where two boyish-looking men sat noting names on a list.

They were clad in the impossible costumes that enlivened the streets, with an extra breadth of red in the civic sash, denoting their rank. Neither was more than twenty-five—thoroughly French—of the boulevardier-Bohemian type, dark hair, pale to sickliness, and the pince-nez, or spectacles, lending a student look to countenances whose expression did not belie the incredible ferocity of their natures. The elder of the two, though there was only a year's difference in age, was Raoul Rigault; the younger was Théophile Ferré, his ultimate and appropriate successor in the Walpurgis night of massacre that ended the commune. Both looked up as the orderly, showing Elliot in, withdrew.

"I thought Gray was sent for," said Ferré, looking over his shoulder at Elliot.

"So he was—that imbecile hasn't sense enough to pluck a thistle," and Rigault touched a bell sharply, paying no more attention to the presence of Elliot than if he had been a chair set down in the room.

"Grégoire, you are intolerable; it was the person who gave this letter I ordered you to bring—the citizen Gray—where is he? Let this man wait and bring him to me."

"But, Citizen Delegate, this is the man who gave the letter; see, here is his number and the time he entered," and the man took the card from Elliot's trembling hand.

Ferré had gotten up and was staring at the confounded victim of his own rashness.

"You are not the citizen Gray. I know him very well; we belonged to the same club. What is the meaning of this masquerade?"

"Yes, young man; what is the meaning of this imposition—explain and be brief."

Elliot saw that he was lost. But he could still save Trajan. The thought restored all his serenity. He was not after all to be unworthy of some of that adoration Bella had so glowingly avowed for the captive. He told the story in a few words. Describing Trajan's substitution and his own desire to prevent it, with the obstacles thrown in his way by his mother and sister. The two listened without a scintilla of emotion in their contemptuously malevolent faces.

"A charming *feuilleton* indeed, *citoyen* spy—we have seen numbers like you."

"But you can prove it by the guards—"

"I don't need to be instructed in my duty to the *patrie*."

He touched the bell.

When Grégoire appeared he nodded toward Elliot. Employing four terrible and decisive words, "La Roquette, spy, confessed."

It was with something of a sense of triumph the luckless victim fell in between the guards that were to conduct him to the prison that he knew was to be his death. He knew it as well as if the guns were pointed at him.

As the heavy vehicle rolled along the quiet waters of the Seine to the bridge of Sebastopol, he remembered his past life in the rollicking quarter beyond; he thought of the meeting in the Luxembourg Garden and the strange chaos of events which had made Trajan twice his saviour and now

by his own imprudence his executioner. Two hours after Trajan and Philip quit cell 25, Elliot entered it—fate has at last played its most fantastic freak, let us hope!

Early as it was on that glorious May morning, Bella and her mother heard the untimely ring and were waiting inside the door for—Elliot. But when Philip and Trajan burst in, there was such a clamor of joy as speedily brought the whole family to the spot. Somebody's cheeks were a perfect garden of roses and her eyes two sparkling Kohinoors.

"But where is Elliot?" asked Bella.

"Isn't he here?" exclaimed both the young men in a breath.

When it was explained that he had gone out the morning before, not to return unless accompanied by the prisoners, Trajan sank helplessly into a seat, looking at Philip in consternation.

"He told me not to be alarmed in case he did not return for one, two, three days," said Bella, trying to appear confident.

Trajan avoided the glance fixed upon him by mother and cousin, but he could not deceive these penetrating eyes. They saw his alarm and shared it.

"Where did he go first?" he asked quietly.

"To the Legation."

"Philip, you wait here; I'll be back in an hour." His worst fears were confirmed when he heard of the letter, and the madness of using his own name. Hurrying back to the Rue François Premier, he assumed a confidence he was far from feeling; and announced that he had gained a clue—all would yet be well. Under pretext of their duty with the general, Philip, on a signal from Trajan, hurried with him from the saddened circle, and as they reached the street he said:

"I'm afraid Elliot has done a fatal thing. Rigault, to whom he took a letter, knows me. If he didn't, his familiar Ferré does. He hates me because I reprimanded some

dishonesties he practiced with the funds of the club. Now we must manage to find out what has happened. We can do this at the headquarters, by sending an orderly to look over the list of prisoners sent from the préfecture yesterday."

Before ten o'clock they had found out the frightful trap into which the poor boy had fallen.

"Our only hope now is to get an immediate order from Roesel fixing a trial. Then delay under some other pretext until the commune falls, or we can invent a rescue. I own that I'm not sanguine, Ferré being in the affair. Roesel is kind-hearted, and will not refuse delay. He dare not do more."

Trajan was over-confident in counting Roesel kind. He was the incarnation of ferocity. It was his hand that had drawn up the most vengeful parts of the bloody code, wasting the populace of the terrified city. But he had a fantastic sort of justice, and he readily gave the order to bring Elliot to trial, and promised to permit one of his friends to testify, but he warned them to expect no mercy. The patriots were aroused, and he quite approved of their determination to make the shortest sort of work with the suspects, without whom the Versaillaise couldn't have maintained the contest a week. But this was something to enable Philip to comfort the despairing, and he set off at once to give them such solace as it suggested. Here he found direful confusion. The great hall on the street floor was transformed into a gipsy camp. A squad of twenty or more Amazons had taken possession of the place. The *concierge*, shrieking and supplicating, stood inside the glass door of her little sitting-room praying the *bonnes et cheres citoyennes* to liberate her, that she was the best of patriots; that her son was *marechel des logis* in the Spartan band of Paris avengers. Nor did Philip's sudden entrance quell the tumult. Costumes were so varied, each patriot assuming any stage rag he was minded to, that the modest gray of the staff did not carry much weight.

"What is the meaning of this *melée*?" Philip asked, as he pushed through the chattering dames, beplumed and armed to the teeth.

Through the confusion he couldn't catch a word of the *concierge's* answer, but her frantic wave of the hand toward the rooms above sent him bounding up stairs like a shot, knocking the astonished patriots right and left in his violent onset. In the vestibule were a terrified and threatening group. The gay Céleste, her arms working wildly, and chattering with the volubility possible only to a French woman who knows she has the advantage, with her admiring lover looking on, Kate holding the door to the *salon* and Bella confronting the virago.

"It was a villainy, it was a *canaillerie* to deceive her as the Citizen Arden had done. Unless the check were instantly exchanged for money the brave women of the Amazons would make its value good in the belongings of the apartment. You are all dishonest, you Americans; you have ruined Paris by making it cost so much that its own citizens can not exist, and you turn a poor girl to madness by a pretended munificence that proves a fraud; you are—"

"What do you want, woman—how dare you come here?" and Philip, whose entrance the demi-rep had not seen, caught her by the shoulder and gave her a whirl hallward that would have sent her sprawling had the agile Auguste not caught her. In an instant her carbine was unslung, and she turned with a hoarse screech of rage to confront her audacious assailant. But Philip's uniform checked her martial fury. Her insolence vanished as she recognized the sash of the superior hierarchy of the commune, and she vociferated confusedly:

"It is a joke, you know. These Pékins tried to trick us out of money due us, and we were playing a little comedy to them."

"Citizen soldier," said Philip sternly, "disarm that thief and take her to St. Pelagie. I will send the charges. Re-

port to the Delegate for War, General Roesel, Place Vendôme."

Céleste was now thoroughly frightened, for she knew that the small ceremony the *patrie* showed the helpless, was ready for its own culprits. She fell on her knees protesting her innocence. She implored Kate to intercede for her; she crawled to Bella and arrested her frightened movement in retreat by clutching her skirt, in the abandonment of her fear.

"Citizen soldier, do you mean to obey, or shall I send for a platoon to have you shot on the spot for insubordination?"

Auguste turned livid; he knew that the words were no idle menace. He had seen his comrades shot down in the open street for resisting or refusing to obey the decisive young chief who had now assumed charge of the commune war. He looked sulkily at the officer, who stood writing the charge in his note-book. When it was finished he held it towards the soldier. Auguste took it, but unable to read, handed it to his mistress, who had risen to her feet and was bewailing her fate in gulps and screeches. When her eyes took note of the charge, written in the significant phraseology of the new order of things, she fell upon the floor in convulsions.

"Come," said Philip, "lay down your arms and march."

Céleste was bunglingly stripped of her carbine, pistols and dagger, and under the support of Auguste staggered into the hall. Philip followed to the foot of the stairs. The astonished Amazons came in a noisy swoop about the group, enraged but cowed.

"*Citoyennes*, you have laid yourselves liable to the tenth article of the people's decree. You have been caught pillaging the domicile of a citizen; the penalty is death. You will march to your quarters and await the justice of the Committee of Safety."

There wasn't a woman among them that had not heard of

the summary methods of this bloody tribunal, and in an instant there was a dispersion that from that day forth robbed the *patrie* of the arms of these stout defenders—as Philip foresaw that it would.

"What on earth did the creature mean?" he asked, returning to the apartment.

"Elliot gave her a check for two thousand francs, payable after the peace, whenever it comes," explained Bella. "She took it to the American banker, though it is drawn on Rothschild. The banker informed her that it was waste paper, and she declared, showed letters from a London correspondent proving that Aunt Arden's fortune had been swept away by failures and depression of stocks in America. I don't know what to make of it. We are no sooner clear of one calamity than another falls upon us. If aunty's fortune is gone, ours, I suppose, is lost too, as both were in the hands of the same agents."

Philip turned ghastly. Cramped for means, Elliot's plight became worse than ever. His own fortune, too, was very likely involved. He must go at once and learn the worst. As he announced this purpose Kate, who had been moving about restlessly, beckoned to him to go with her. Wondering what new calamity impended, he followed her passively into the library. She shut the door carefully, and coming over very close to him broke out in a guilty whisper of rage and contrition:

"An' this is my doin'. I was afeard Bella would be dazzled by that prince body, or that Jezebel's brother would prevail with her, and when I was in London I just callogued wi' my banker to send the rumor here, to that Rue Scribe fellow, that the Arden and Briscoe fortunes were lost. I thought it would shut us from the untoward thing that threatened, but it has worked sore mischief, I'm afeard."

Philip laughed. A great burden had been lifted from him.

"It will be a lesson for you, Kate dear, not to wage tricks

with Theo. She is more than a match for you, or the whole of us together. However, there is no great harm done. The effect will be only temporary. It will cripple us in funds and perhaps compel my aunt to leave this costly apartment."

He would not add to the poor spinster's wretchedness by hinting that the lack of money might destroy the last chance to rescue Elliot. He had learned of the traffic going on among the officials of the Committee, the buying off of condemned hostages for round sums of money, and from the first he had looked with something like confidence to this dangerous resource. At the Rue Scribe the tale was not only confirmed, but so well had Kate's agent obeyed his instructions, all the fortunes of the family were represented as ruined, Philip sharing in the disaster. The wily banker, who had bent double before the rich Arden family in other days, could hardly find time to tell the story, and dismissed the young man as if he had been a porter. The Ardens had done him the double wrong of banking with a Parisian house, and civilly declining the profuse hospitalities of his toady table in the prince's quarter of the city. He had been many years building up a certain prestige in the nomad society of the capital and he had a long memory for the Americans venturesome enough to dispute the *pas* with him.

The Ardens had not disputed it; they had simply ignored the pretensions of their compatriot. Neither his manners, nor his whimsical affectation of æsthetic culture and Mecænas patronage of the art celebrities of the day attracted them to his politic *salons*. He took good care to make known the humiliation of the arrogant family, and though society no longer existed there was not an American in the city who had not heard the news before it had been known two days in the Rue Scribe in official shape. Trajan did not regard the matter so seriously. He had been gathering all accessible information about the course that the Committee of Safety was to take with Elliot. He was to be given a hearing two days later. By a disheartening stroke of ill

luck Trajan was sent to Fort Issy, then in the last throes of resistance. Roesel himself conducted the first part of the operations and only waited the assembling of a force of twelve thousand men to turn the defense into a sortie.

His genius for war might have worked the miracle looked for by the absurd incapables of the Central Committee, but with the bungling and confusion that marked their hideous travesty, only seven thousand men appeared to undertake the decisive action. But the delay had kept Trajan a week from the Rue Vendôme, whence he had received word that Elliot had been brought before Ferré, that he had demanded an instant sentence of death, but on a vote of two to his one he had been remanded as "suspect" to be kept in La Roquette, to be shot in his turn, to avenge executions certified from Versailles. Trajan learned furthermore that Roesel had resigned, and sure enough, when the discomfited delegate for war returned to the Place Vendôme his successor, Dombrowski, was waiting to take his place. Dombrowski was a Pole, a man of fine presence and a very capable officer. He saluted his predecessor, who might have been his son, and asked politely what his address would be?

"The prison Mazas," responded Roesel quietly, and recommending his aids to the new delegate, he shook hands cordially with all present, and requesting Dombrowski to sign his commitment, placed himself at the disposal of the guard and withdrew as composedly as though setting out to breakfast! It was his own decree he was obeying, for his was the hand that had drawn up the law condemning unsuccessful generals to prison, and if inefficiency could be proven, death. From his cell in Mazas Paris read the next day in the newspapers his excoriation of the greed, ignorance and helplessness of the commune, and when he died a few days after by his own resolute hand, it was suspected that his fellow conspirators had made way with him.

Roesel's taking off made a change for the worse in the

fortunes of his two aids. Dombrowski, who was venal as he was adroit, had tools of his own that he wanted near him. The young men were curtly relegated to the ranks of a regiment known as Avengers of Flourens, and directed to report at once for duty. They found the rendezvous in the Caserne Château d'Eau, and to Trajan's great relief, not far from La Roquette. They were received with fraternal embraces and given an order for the Avengers' uniform, which they had to walk three miles to obtain in the dépôt of clothing, Quai d'Orsay. The dress threw the two conscripts into an unseemly merriment, that would have gone hard with them had the patriots suspected the cause of their levity. It gave them the appearance of the huzzars we see in provincial opera troups, and Philip shook with laughter till tears filled his eyes at the ludicrous spectacle Trajan presented, with a dark blue jacket profusely frogged with red, overalls of fiery red, like the regular army trowsers, a kepi of red, a long cutlass-like sword, a carbine and revolvers, for they had been ordered to serve mounted, so soon as it was known that they were Saxons, who were all supposed to ride, while few Frenchmen are masters of that hardy exercise.

The routine of the barracks was *réveil* at half-past four in the morning, horse-cleaning at five, roll-call at seven, and breakfast at nine. But though these were the regulations they found that no one lived up to them. In spite of very severe penalties prescribed the men went and came as they pleased, those living in Paris going home to sleep on comfortable beds at night, instead of the wisps of straw on the barrack bunks. The latitude was soon understood by Philip and Elliot, and during the detention here one or the other spent four or five hours out of each twenty-four in the Rue François Premier. The collapse of the wild struggle was now in every body's mind, and had the Thiers cabinet acted humanely, or even with politic prudence, the great city would have been spared the final awful convulsion of

fire and massacre. The adherents of the mad rulers were falling away, gorged with plunder, secreting themselves in every quarter.

Desperation alone chained the fighting mobs to the jolting car of destruction. On the night of Saturday, May 20th, bedlam turned to Pandemonium. The streets swarmed with drunken men and maniacal women. The cry of *reactionnaire* was heard in stertorous breathings on every side. The luckless wretch caught in the street without uniform or letters patent of loyalty, made swift acquaintance with the chassepôt or the lanterne. Monday, May 22d, it was known that MacMahon had carried the walls on the south west, and that his army was in the Bois de Boulogne. Then the carnival of despair and extremity set in.

All the murder, pillage, lawlessness that had gone before were mere grotesque specters of terror, compared to the horrors on horrors' head ghastly piled during the stupendous frenzy of the days that were come. All the barracks in the center of the city were emptied and the pallid conscripts hurried to the entrenched fortress formed by the barricades in the Place de la Bastille. It was noon and the May sun hot as August, scorched the nondescript warriors swarming in the disorderly inclosure. Long lines of victims came constantly up from the lower prisons. Priests predominated, and the sight of them kindled the dying fury of the patriots.

As Trajan lay baking in the sun under the column of July, girdled far up to the crown in broad red bands, a melancholy procession entered from the Boulevard Chateau d'Eau; fifteen hundred suspects from the prisons of the outer boulevards. Whenever priests were discovered the women set upon them, tearing off their broad hats and using them as clouts to beat them in the face. Their soutanes were torn off bodily and made into strips to tie the helpless groups two by two. The obscenity and curses of these unsexed monsters shamed the very men at work with them. All the afternoon this hideous work went on. In the cool of the

evening a horrifying clamor was heard outside the barricades. Streams of women, disheveled and bloody, came pouring in. Indescribable outbreak filled the air. A group of six or eight persons, mostly in clerical garb, were hustled along, the feeble guard, even if disposed, unable to give them protection.

"It is the bandit Darboy, late archbishop of the so-called God, who thought to starve the people by hiding millions worth of stores from the commune. He will need no food when the *patrie* has done with him." This was said at Trajan's elbow by a gentle boyish-looking patriot, who passed most of the day playing écarté. Rising and pressing forward to witness this impious comedy Trajan was carried to the La Roquette barrier. The crowd pressing fiercely trampled down one of the guards, and Trajan quickly seizing the chance snatched the falling musket and placed himself with the maltreated group. He could do little to protect the venerable bishop, but by good natured banter set those nearest laughing, and when a Paris crowd laughs the mischief is over. The miserable train proceeded comparatively unmolested to the somber entrance of La Roquette.

Trajan as guard accompanied the priests into the well-remembered court, up the great stairway, and was the last to whisper a word of comfort to the dazed archbishop as the door of cell nineteen clanged into its socket, like the report of the muskets there to open the door of another life a few days later. Deeply as he was touched by the prelate's agony, Trajan's feverish body was all a-tremble to catch a glimpse of the imprisoned Elliot.

The very first face his startled eye rested on was the one he was in search of. He had turned mechanically to cell 25, where he had endured the horror of suspense with Philip. There stood Elliot gazing with pensive sympathy at the bars inclosing the archbishop. Even had he not heard of Elliot's disguise, Trajan would have recognized the lustrous

blue eyes, the round winning mouth, the charming profile. Elliot glanced at him, but disguised in the motley of the "Avengers" discovered nothing familiar in the other. Encouraged by the success of his scheme thus far, Trajan went below with his fellow guards, to gain all the points possible as to the resources for concealment on the ground floor. He could get no opportunity to inspect the strongly barred portals, or follow the windings of the circular passage that ran like a great cavern between the body of the prison and its circumvallating walls. No hope of breaking through or in any manner whatever puncturing these massive bulwarks.

Rescued Elliot must be, and that night, for death was not only on the lips of the drunken mob, but its sinister shadow stood out in the preparations he had noted in the court. The "Attila hordes of Thiers," might reach the place now any hour and they must meet the weltering bodies of their allies! In his character of guard, Trajan had the run of the place—such a thing as discipline being long since dismissed. Crowds of ranting patriots piled up the stairs for a last sight and last count, to the group of notables that were to die with the archbishop. The poor old man was discovered talking with the Chief Justice Bonjean, through the narrow interstice in the end of his cell where the division wall, reaching the window, left space enough for the unhappy prisoners to touch hands as well as talk. A great cry was raised, the turnkey was called and the archbishop hustled out and thrust into cell 23 where Trajan had been lodged. The crowd pressed in a vociferating mass upon the keeper and pushed him away from the cell before he could take the key from the open door. Favored by the dim light, for the keeper's lantern alone illuminated the gloomy waste of stone, iron and mortar, Trajan snatched the key and slipped it in his pocket.

During the long night he walked the corridor at intervals, but there was always some one too near to give

him a chance to speak to Elliot. Before daylight the cells were opened and the prisoners marched down to the court-yard. At first all supposed that it was for the final tragedy, but passing the gaoler Le Français, Trajan heard that facetious patriot confiding to a crony, that it was only a false alarm, as the execution could not take place until Ferré came, and that would not be before night. Assured that Elliot was in no danger, Trajan hurried to the empty cell, snatched the key from the lock and laid the one he had seized the night before from the archbishop's abandoned cell, carelessly on the pavement a little distance from the door. He entered the cell, stripped himself of his uniform and crawled under the low bedstead. A half hour later the prisoners returned. Elliot's door was banged violently and then there was a pause. A key was fitted in the lock and then another and another, and finally, making no sign, the perplexed keeper, giving no hint to the prisoner, continued onward to finish reinstalling the inmates. Elliot, on entering the cell, threw himself on the bed. The uniform placed in a heap under the sheet at once attracted his notice.

The froggings, high boots, sword, and pistols, told the story plainly enough. Where had they come from? Evidently an unknown friend was succoring him. Throwing off his own clothes he was instantly in the uniform. Groping in the cot for the sword, it fell between the wall and the bed. To his astonishment, it made no noise, and supposing it caught in the clothes, thrust his arm down to regain it. He almost cried out, as his hand came in contact with a warm body. He stood an instant astouneded! Who was it? Who but one man in all the world was capable of this sublime folly.

"Trajan," he whispered, huskily, "it won't do, you are right in thinking me capable of this dastard selfishness, after all the folly you have seen me commit; but I swear to God, I swear by my mother's love, I swear, that I will never leave this place, unless you are——"

He halted suddenly on a warning from Trajan. The steps of the keeper were heard clanking down the pavement.

"Slip into the bed," whispered Trajan.

Barely was the uniformed figure under the clothes, than the keeper stopped at the cell, inserted a key, peered in and seeing Elliot looking at him, remarked pleasantly, that he was afraid the citizen would take cold with an unlocked door and laughing softly to himself, walked away. In a moment Trajan was out from under the cot, whispering to the occupant to lie still. Bending over him that his whisper might not penetrate the walls, he breathed in the ear of Elliot:

"You are crowning all your folly by this stupid perversity. What difference can it make whether I am shot or not. A year ago this very month, I waited twelve hours for darkness to leap into the Seine. My death will leave no mark, yours will. Bella is waiting for you, and—and—Edith—and your mother. You will break their hearts. As for me, Edith is very young and she will soon forget the—the absent. I implore you in God's name, don't delay. Every minute is vital. Get up and go and don't bring danger by speaking." He fairly dragged the young man to his feet, but he was not moved by this despairing plea.

"I should never look an honest man in the face again, if I did this cowardly thing. Beside," he added, "you seem to forget that the door is locked and that you have put your life in jeopard, and that we are both doomed."

For answer, Trajan rose and looking down through the gloomy waste of darkness, could see the zone of the circle of light, that fell from the keeper's lamp. Taking the key he had secreted, he thrust his slim wrist through the cross-bars, inserted it in the lock and turning it the door was open.

"There you are free, go. I shall find means to get away, I swear it."

"You may swear until you are petrified. Stir from this place I will not, until you have first left it."

Trajan could hear the obstinate lad stripping himself of the uniform. His brain became confused; his body numb. Was ever such a chance thrown away with such childlike heedlessness? He could have strangled the ingrate, as he heard the garments, one after the other, laid on the bed. What in God's name was to be done. He had himself put on Elliot's clothes. If he could not be saved one way he could another. He got up and looked out into the yawning darkness, and opening the door suddenly he said decisively:

"The roll will be called in half an hour, the clocks have just struck four. If you are not in the court to answer the name Légare, all will be lost—good-by." Closing the door he slipped back toward the circular stairway. Thunderstruck by this unexpected solution of the problem, Elliot sank upon the bed in despair. Was he to be the evil genius of this extraordinary man after all? After he had put earth and hope behind him, secretly supported by the thought of the figure his expiation would make in Bella's eyes, was he to return and tell her that he had been outwitted into his old impuissance and egotistic incapacity! If he put on the uniform, he might yet undo the mischief. He would follow Trajan. He would drag him before the keeper and disclose the trick by which he had been trapped into the uniform. Now he put it on feverishly enough. He was a soldier in a minute. He recalled Trajan's warning about the roll-call. He looked out to reconnoiter. Guards were walking about in the darkness, some of them sprawling on the floor where they had spread their blankets on coming up with the prisoners. He slipped out softly and turning to lock the door, found the key gone. What matter. The keeper would discover the flight within an hour any way. He set off down the wide chamber and laid down by a group of guards still snoring peacefully. The rataplan from the head of the

stairs aroused them and with the rest, he fell into line in the court and answered with a great tremor, when the citoyen Légare's name was called in the roll.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THEO PLAYS HER LAST CARD.

THERE is no female reader of this history, I feel with a due sense of guilt, who does not cry out against the further ignoring of our fascinating Theo! What are the perils and mishaps of these hulking, addle-headed young men, to the lightest act of this masterful little adept? You don't catch her mooning about, prey to the devouring patriots. What business she had with them she did in her decisive piquant way, and having done it, she retires discreetly, to wait until the conditions are restored when she can reign and shine and lead the tender lambs in her own well devised gambols about her. Madame de Bellechasse declared that it was worth the perils of the *culotte fracas* to have been permitted to become *intime* with such *esprit*, such *aplomb*, such *diablesse enchantant*, and never had the Bellechasse table groaned with such plenty. The long purse of Lafayette reached the hearts and hastened the hands of the thrifty patriots, and you may be sure that Theo knowing her *milieu* did not stint the supplies from her lavish kinsman's kitchen. Annette and the old marquis prayed that the magician might long remain the witch of the domestic board. Never had the poor old fellow indulged in such capons, such *dindon*, such *Beaune* or such cuts of beef. Whence it came, Madame de Bellechasse declared with uplifted eyes was a mystery—for love or money she was unable to procure such abundance and such rarities. Theo remarked afterward, that the countess had employed the love and money in the wrong

proportion ; enough money, even without the love, she said wickedly, was sure to bring whatever was much desired in this world, and the honest Lafayette, proud of his brilliant little sister-in-law's wit and spirit, roared again at the picture of noble niggardliness portrayed in Theo's vivacious colors.

Her mind set at rest as to the letters, the restless soul made frequent sallies about the less turbulent quarters of the city, returning with budgets of observation that kept the household in an uproar. Once deeply veiled she had penetrated to the Rue François Premier, but dared not enter—lest Céleste's spies should be on the watch. The next day she wrote to Elliot, but the letter was handed back to the messenger, with the information that Elliot was in prison. This was the time that the young Fouché was combining the great plot for Trajan's rescue. She could not for a moment credit Elliot's incarceration, and she made up her mind that Bella had reconquered her cousin's vagrant affection. She laughed softly to herself as she fancied him doing penance and pleading her own love as justification, "As if," she murmured half aloud, "I could love that doll-faced booby in the same world that Trajan walks in." She laughed too, as she recalled his implicit trust in her mere signs—for she had never spoken a word that meant love. She had let him kiss her, much as she would have let Lafayette's spaniel lick her hand.

One day Lafayette came with great news. He had met Gibson on the boulevards marching to the sorely beleaguered Fort Vanves. He had carried off the letters all right and had given them to a friend of the family, Gray, who was imprisoned in La Roquette as Légare.

The blood curdled in an icy stream on Theo's heart when this appalling mischance came to her ears. What, in his hands ! The evidence of her double perfidy ; the evidence too of treasons that would make her odious forever to all she looked upon as her dependence in the great career she had marked out for herself ! Worst of all she dared not invoke

Lafayette's aid to extricate the damning letters from Trajan, for she could not explain to him the reasons that made his holding them a hundred-fold more perilous than Céleste.

She stormed finely, when flying to her chamber after Lafayette's departure, swelling with satisfaction over the good news, as he thought it, he had brought to comfort his pretty relative. She couldn't mingle hearty curses with her bitter bewailings and self-reproaches, as the luckless Elliot, with man's privilege in profanity, did; all she could do was to bemoan the foray upon Céleste which at peril of life had only resulted in placing the fatal packet in the last hands in the world she would have had them reach. What could be done? She knew Trajan too well to dream that he would open them under ordinary circumstances. But if, as she knew was inevitable, Elliot ever broached the charges he had gathered from Madelaine Tarbes, the packet would be called into play and the secret of the denunciation and her own ulterior agency discovered. She must first of all placate Céleste at any price. That was a desperate and instant necessity.

She was quick to act, this inveterate campaigner, and within an hour a discreet matron, faithful to the house of Bellechasse and an inordinate admirer of the American guest, was despatched to the Rue d'Auvergne with a cautious message appointing a rendezvous in the Rue Galilée, where Theo took precautions to have herself guarded. She held out a tempting bait. An immediate *dot* and the installation of herself and Auguste on the lands of the Prince d'Amboise in Touraine, so soon as peace came. There was a strange look in Theo's eyes when she learned that Céleste had been consigned to Mazas, and from Mazas had been sent to La Roquette. Both in the same prison? The only two people on earth who knew any thing detrimental to her honor? her utmost pretension? Her heart beat till she put both hands to her side to check the fierce action. What if it should happen; what if one stroke took both from the radiant sun-

shine of her life? Why did she shake as if in mortal ague? Why did she fly and bury her face deep in the pillows? Why did she cover her eyes as if to shut out some horrid spectacle? In La Roquette—*le depôt des condamnés*—the guardian temple of Mère Guillotine! Trajan, the young, the brilliant, the masterful, the chivalrous, the medieval knight, stripped of the golden harness of the troubadour and set down in a world whose speech even was ajar with his compromising blunders! That noble head dropped trunkless, into the same basket that had held the malefactor Tropmann's? But why should she tremble and quake? She had no hand in his trapping; she had done him no injury. The ruse to alienate him from the Ardens was a fair stroke in the campaign of life. She couldn't help him to escape, even if her head like her heart were his. And Céleste too; that vicious termagant, who had pried into her secrets, who had watched her leading and misleading Trajan to that final declaration! Her prating tongue would cease its mischievous chattering. Perhaps her head would lie in the basket with Trajan's and her dead lips hiss out her hate and revelation?

But she was safe; that was the exulting final thought. Safe, to do and plan and conquer. What were a hecatomb of Célestes and Trajans to the grand destiny she was on the verge of entering. A princess of Amboise could not stop to mourn such obscurities, even tho' her heart lay buried with the victim of Mère Guillotine. When she descended to dinner that day madame congratulated her on the limpid sparkle in her eye; the old marquis kissed her hand gallantly as he handed her to the episcopal throne next him, and Annette made her so many and such pretty compliments on her ravishing beauty, that our little Theo imagined for a moment she was installed in her princely halls near Blois.

Even better fortune came the day following—Sunday. The army had captured the walls so painfully reared by Thiers

in 1848; they held the Bois de Boulogne and the skirmishers extended far into the Élysée quarter. It was dark when a great clatter was heard in the narrow Rue de l'Université. Then a military step on the stairs—certainly no communard ever came with such martial distinction as that. Theo saw a gleam of gold buttons, glinting steel scabbards and she was in her brother's arms. With him came the Viscount Bellechasse, and great was the felicity in the ancient hôtel of the family. When the rapture of the news was working at its most expansive effervescence, Jules carried his sister off to the corridor to tell her that the prince was home waiting for her, and that the soldiery having the place under their guns there was no longer any danger there for her.

She was aflame in an instant. She would be ready while he was explaining, and when she returned and found the recent rapture clouded by the news of her purpose, she could hardly restrain a laugh. The poor old marquis let fall warm tears from his dim old eyes, and Annette whispered that she would come often and visit her *chère* Theo. On the way home there was time to tell all that had befallen. Theo dwelt in delicate lines upon the Céleste adventure, reminding Jules to see that guards were set on the house in the Rue d'Auvergne, so soon as that quarter was recovered, to secure the plate and linen stowed in Céleste's room.

"But that may be a week yet; we have only begun the work. The communards are now fighting like Titans—by George, half the valor they showed on the breastworks yesterday and this morning would have ruined us three weeks ago—for our own soldiers have been shaky from the first."

"Where is the prison La Roquette?" asked Theo, with only a passing curiosity of tone.

"That is four miles from our advance line. It will be about the last place we shall reach; the more's the pity. Archbishop Darboy is there, with Judge Bonjean, the curé of the Madelaine and your old friend Père Barodet and De Marsay."

"Is there no chance of—of—rescuing the prisoners there —will no special effort be made?"

"I fear there is no chance. If the monsters of the executive committee keep their threat, and there isn't much doubt but they will, all we shall ever see of the poor wretches there will be their bones, if even they are not thrown into the street."

Theo's step became more and more elastic Jules observed with surprise, as they pushed on over the now deserted streets. She did not mention Trajan's presence in La Roquette to Jules, but when she sat with the prince in Lafayette's gorgeous library an hour later, she said suddenly, as if just reminded of it: "You remember that fiery communard, Gray?"

"Very well, the young man who preached the right of the township to govern and the union of all townships as the ideal of political force. A silly doctrine, which I trust the present experiment will cure him of, for otherwise he is a remarkably agreeable man."

"You mustn't mention it to Jules, for there's no telling what foolish complication he might make to rescue the man; he is in La Roquette among the hostages. It seems that he was crowding some of the less capable leaders and thrust into the list as a 'suspect.'"

"Such men are a menace to society, far more dangerous than the *canaille*, and it is just as well he should be relieved from the responsibilities he thinks himself under to educate the world in his monstrous doctrines," and the prince raised his arm as if addressing that assembly where he now saw himself Prime Minister, under the last of the Bourbons. Theo's bosom heaved.

"Ah, why has France been mad enough to keep such men as you from directing her destinies! It is the Athenians and Aristides over again. You are too great in mind, too just in principle, too noble in impulse, for these poor sordid every-day people."

The prince arose, swelling responsive to this delicious adulation. He walked the floors, his spurs sinking into the rich Turkey rugs, and his blue and gold uniform in odd contrast to the dark panelings and sober color of the volumes.

"Yes, Theo, *ma chère*, and to you I owe the inspiration, the resolve, the recognition, of the mandate my birth confers upon me! To you, born in a Republic, but the most princely of women!" He came over and kneeled gallantly before her, kissing her hands in a proudly chivalrous fashion that stripped the act of burlesque. "You shall be my Pucelle; you shall be the Pucelle of the restored monarchy; not the simple shepherdess prey to the schemers, but a Medici in managing men and a Lucrece in wifely fidelity."

It is not fit, however, that plebeian eyes should penetrate too closely in princely love-making. Beside, the prince's love had long ago been made. The scene we have decorously withdrawn our desecrating eyes from, was but an episode in our matchless Theo's felicity—a hint to the fair that mind is sometimes a motor even in princely passions!

The banner of good fortune once more unfurled, Theo was made happy by Lafayette's restoration in the morning. He had been wise enough to secrete himself in a thicket in the Bois and had no difficulty in making out his status to the conquering army, which had not yet begun that atrocious system of universal slaughter which made the worst excesses of the commune deeds of grace and holiness in comparison.

"War's a good deal like dancing or love-making," the warrior confided to Jules; "a fellow prefers to select his partner. Not that I have a word of fault to find with my comrades. They were all first-rate good fellows and my heart aches to think of the fix they've got themselves in. Poor devils—they're like them fool Sioux, led by the nose by their chiefs and driven to madness by them beats of missionaries, post-traders and land-claim jumpers. By the

great Hickory! I agree with them commune fellars—when they know what they do agree on," he added, as a little self-remonstrance against this candid declaration of faith. "They hold that society has a duty to itself before any thing else; that war and cabinets and ministers and all the show of kings and what not are only strings to the fiddle; that the township should be like the family, taking care of its own, but refusing to levy taxes for war and general enterprises. Now I believe in that doctrine, 'pon my soul I do," he added earnestly, as Theo and Jules smiled incredulously.

"And you are willing to share your money and divide your property in equal proportions with all your neighbors in Napoleonville?" asked Jules laughingly.

"Now I've found that's no more the real communist doctrine than Peter's pence is the doctrine of the Church of Rome. You might as well charge property division on the New Testament, for that certainly does command a man to divide with the poor. I have talked with hundreds of these communists and they repudiate that sentiment *in toto*. It may follow in practice, as extortion follows in the best schemes of taxation, but it does not lead in the real doctrine of communism, which is simply a principle of democracy—applied to the township as a basis!"

"You will put yourself upon that platform to run for Congress when Montana is admitted to the Union?" and Jules laughed uproariously.

"By thunder, I'll do it! You talk about communism being confiscation. Why, what is it compared with the tariff those Eastern knaves and idiots have saddled upon us? If that isn't communism as you define it, I'd like to know what is. It enforces division of property down to the five-cent piece in the bricklayer's pocket; it robs the million rich to make the hundred rich richer and cheats the million poor, while it drives the thousands into the almshouse or beggary!"

"I declare, Lafayette, what these Frenchmen say about

all Americans being born politicians is literally true. Here are you a man of pleasure falling into the dryest discussion with as much eagerness as a Parisian into the last scandal," and Theo got up to indicate that political economy was not in the rounded circle of her accomplishments.

The grand mansion on the Roi de Rome became the *quartier général* of the triumphant Versaillaise, and the prince beheld with complacency the havoc his *fiancée* made upon the brilliant aides of General Vinoy, upon whose staff he had been serving. As yet the army held only the prince's quarter of the city, and Theo made the most of her opportunities to give her name and her brother-in-law's opulence *renomée* among the noblemen who crowded the royal *salons*. Full table and open house were maintained from the day after her return until long after the commune's resistance had been crushed and the hapless thirty thousand, most of them innocent, were offered as a holocaust to the cowardly ferocity of the agents of law and order! But the sound of these surpassing gayeties did not penetrate the splendid misery in the Rue François Premier. Only a message had been received through a kind-hearted comrade remaining on Dombrowski's staff the day after Philip and Trajan had been degraded to the ranks. It was not known what had become of them, and with their eclipse the feeble hope of Elliot's rescue waned. But curiously enough, as the hearts of the rest grew heavy Edith assumed a surprising confidence.

She spoke in accents of the strongest sincerity of her faith in Trajan's cleverness to rescue her brother. As to himself she made no doubt that he would come back in good time. The appearance of the army down as far as the Rond Point on the Champs Élysée had lessened their personal danger, while the closing in on the center of the city added to the danger of Elliot and his friends, as the missiles of the rescuing army were a new danger.

So soon as communication was safe, Theo with Jules hastened to the Ardens. They were appalled at the dreadful

situation of the family—at least Jules was. He saw with despair the ravages wrought upon Bella by her cousin's peril, and he did not attempt to deceive himself by misreading the meaning. He promised that every care should be taken to save the lives of the victims, should they fall into the hands of the army, but he refrained from adding to the anguish of the family, by informing them that there were tacitly understood orders that no prisoners should be taken—that the business of the soldiers in the rest of Paris was massacre.

Theo was reassured by the reception she met. A lingering fear had haunted her that Céleste might, in her desperation, have gone to the Ardens and railed against her. She did not know much, unless she had read the letters, and even then without circumstances which Elliot and Trajan could alone fill in, the story would be too wild for belief. Kate, it is true, had left the room without even bowing when she entered. But the Scotch woman had never shown her much consideration, and she rather enjoyed her discomfited enemy's retreat. Edith was no more nor less cordial than she had ever been—while Bella, who always delighted in Theo's wit, was quite as cordial as usual. As she was a favorite with Mrs. Arden and Mrs. Briscoe, the disdain of Kate and the indifference of Edith did not check her high spirits. She remained to breakfast, and when she departed with Jules, that young gentleman was the only drawback to her gayety. His melancholy had not escaped the watchful sister, nor its cause.

"Jules, you are really as much of a gaby as Elliot. I tell you that the man Bella is mourning is not Elliot—it is Gray. Did you see her eyes kindle as her mother told of Trajan's characteristic devotion, when he slipped into the clutches of the commune to save Elliot? Trust me, I know what a woman's heart is, when there is an imagination to lead it. Bella is all imagination. Elliot is a commonplace to her. She thinks of him, much as I think of you—as a weak fellow to be guided and held up," and she hugged his arm and

looked up with irresistible witchery into his gloomy face. "Let Mère Guillotine take her own to her bosom, or rather let the commune bullets find the hearts of all the hostages in La Roquette, and you will be leading Bella to the altar before the house of Amboise has an heir."

"God—Theo, you don't mean that you are counting on Gray's death—on his massacre rather—oh, Theo, Theo, I'm afraid of you," and he stopped in the street, the Cours de la Reine, and looked out over the shining waters of the Seine. He was not quick in perception of the infraction of the moral unities, but he had come under the force of the light that shines in the darkest soul, when its recesses are penetrated by a pure and real love. As he shrank from any act that would give the sort of people he most prized the balance of scandal or reproach against him, so he recoiled in mental disgust from the apparition of his sister, of whom he was so fond and proud, embodying tendencies that he associated with the lowest sort of criminal method. Theo divined something of the bent of her brother's thought.

"I'm counting on nothing, silly fellow. I have remarked that love takes all enterprise and motive from a man. You're not half the creature of help and wit and force you were last year. You're getting more useless every day. You will neither suggest ways or means yourself, nor approve those I advise.

"You turn on me in melodramatic rolling of the eyes and the old tiresome platitudes of the hypocrites who prate virtues they are last to practice—I tell you what, Jules, people who have time to criticise others' sins, have not gained it by doing virtuous things themselves. I'm never afraid of people who malign, for I know they are merely looking in upon themselves and taking what poor comfort they can by fouling the first comer with washings of their own wickedness.

"Your really virtuous people have no time to know that their neighbors sin; they don't know sin when they see it. Look

at that saint Clare, or that even saintlier Mrs. Arden. They are the only people in Paris who have never glozed me in the swell mob of darkness, with innuendoes, and yet, if the recording angel were standing on that parapet assigning places to the quick and dead, the sinlessness of these two people would be spotless enough to save the whole city, and goodness knows there has been nothing left the future to invent in the way of wickedness after we go."

"You know well enough, Theo, I'm not squeamish in the fair rules of the game, but it frightens me, it humiliates me, to think of my sister counting on an innocent man's murder to gain an end. It has a repulsive melodrama sound that shocks me. It recalls the coarse female heroines of the blood and thunder school of novels. It degrades us to adventurers of a type the police journals illustrate. I hate being poor, but I would rather be poor than even passively criminal."

"You're silly, morbid and unreasonable; the shadow on the brow of your love throws its penumbra over all your eye rests upon. I promised that since you were so mad as to count on love with wealth, Trajan should be no obstacle. I had two perfectly fair means for removing him from your way; one was in operation and sure to succeed," and she laughed softly as she thought of the artless Elliot's transparent inquiries that last night in the Rue Galilée—"fate obtrudes an agency devised by Trajan himself and makes my promise good in another and tragical way. *Voilà tout.*"

But Jules declined to fall into her wheedling moral laxities, as was his amiable habitude, and the two walked homeward along the deserted streets—silent and thoughtful. Jules grew more and more morose as he thought of the light spirit beside him, his own sister, of whose wit and clever faculty every one made boast, and of which he was so proud. It terrified him to think of her so gay and heartless, trafficking even passively in such diabolism. He knew that the last few years of her life had been steeped in the atmosphere of

intrigue, and though he had never followed minutely her machinations, he had not had a word of fault to find so long as they were confined to artifices against which all the world was born armed and, if overcome, it was by their own stupidity or over-confidence. This cold-blooded open-eyed speculation on the slaughter of an innocent man, even by remote and stranger agencies, filled him with horror.

He watched her with beating heart as she recounted to the prince on re-entering, the painful comedy the Ardens had gone through during the eight weeks of anarchy in the city. He was too much immersed in his forebodings of the hopelessness of his passion to mark the insidious venom of the figure she made of Trajan in the story. But the effect was to leave upon the shuddering nobleman and the half-dozen staff officers, the impression that Trajan had been responsible for a good deal in the trials of the family. Nor did the duplicity end here.

An amorous young vicomte, captain under General Douay, who was to have the glory of rescuing the hostages in Roquette, came in to tell of his mission, as Theo insinuated Trajan's turpitude to the group. When the danger of the young man's post was dwelt on, she warned him against the communard Gray—Jules having left the room—and gave such a lurid sketch of his life and doctrines, that the officers declared to a man that society would never be safe with such a monster at large.

"This *misérable* is at La Roquette, you say, mademoiselle?" the young captain asked eagerly as Theo went over to the piano.

"Yes, he seems to have made enemies among his fellow patriots, and was thrust in there some time ago; but he will probably appear as a victim of the commune when your rescuing band enters the prison, and soldiers being magnanimous, he will soon be teaching his favorite doctrines again."

"It will be in the spirit, then, I promise you!" cried the indignant preserver of society. "I wish I knew his face."

Theo, leaving the instrument, went to a little writing-desk and came back to the warrior with a cabinet photograph which she handed him, saying carelessly:

"He is a rather handsome fellow, don't you think?"

The captain looked at the fine face with a puzzled expression, turned the card over and read: "Nadar, 1868," and tried to make out a written inscription which had been removed. He held it up to Theo mutely as she turned the music over. She glanced at it indifferently and said without wincing:

"He was a friend of my brother's in the Latin quarter in those days—but we have seen little of him since the old times."

"*A très joli garçon tout de même*, it is a pity he is so misled."

"Rather a pity that he is so able to mislead others," amended Theo, thrumming the keys softly.

When the captain arose to go late in the evening, Theo pinned her colors on his lappel, to preserve him in the desperate dangers that every body looked forward to on the morrow, for the final push for the communist citadel was ordered. She gave him a bewildering smile as she shook hands at the door, from which he bore not only her colors, but the photograph Trajan had given her in the days when she was the goddess pure and free for him.

"What a superb *petite diable* it is!" murmured the intoxicated hero, as he passed under the opening blossoms that bathed the soft May night with perfume. He strode along, touching the odorous magnolias, released from hot-house hostage, thinking of that human magnolia within, filling his heart with a perfume that was already becoming pain.

"Why does she want this handsome communard killed? Is it a youthful amour that has become *un ennuie?* Well, if a man hasn't sense enough to get rid of himself when a

pretty woman tires of him, it's part of the duty of the soldier of law and order to give him riddance! It will end the *liaison* convenably," he muttered, as he slipped the photograph into his breast pocket, "and in love as in war, death brings promotion to the deserving!"

Early that very morning the anxious hearts in the Rue François Premier were gladdened by a substantial gleam of joy. Philip, a goblin from the damned, dragged his blackened, bloody figure into the hallway, just as the *concierge* was opening the doors. She screamed at sight of him. His head, hatless, was a mass of blood; his right arm hung limp, partly supported by the sleeve pinned to the bosom. His face powder-stained and unrecognizable. He had barely strength to gasp:

"It is I—Kent!" when he fell on his knees against the low stone-work of the *concierge's* lodge. She understood the words, but losing her head, fled to the family crying out dolorously that monsieur was below dying. In spite of the shock, or because of it, Bella and Mrs. Arden kept their heads cool. Neither gave a sign of the anguish of disappointment that overwhelmed them when it turned out to be Philip instead of Elliot. It was midday before he recovered sufficiently to give them the narrative of the last few days.

He had not seen Trajan since the night of the 21st—it was then noon of the 24th. He had been swept away with a crowd of hostages from the barricades in the Place de la Bastille. Searching for him, he, Philip, had pushed far from his battalion. Learning from stragglers that the army held the Élysée quarter, he had concealed himself by day and crawled on his hands and knees by night, down to the Rue de Rivoli, down the quais, to the barricades in the Place de la Concorde. Then making a final break the night before, he had been recaptured and dragged back into the Tuileries garden. He was flung into one of the huts, left since the siege.

He had managed to purloin a pistol and saber, and

while the guards, who were not at all vigilant, were emptying a cask of wine and sticking pine torches in barrels of petroleum, he had crawled to the river; had plunged in and swam as far as his strength would let him; had then gone to the shore on the side of the Invalides and was exulting in his escape, when three furies broke upon him, below the bridge of the Alma. He made vigorous use of his saber, but they had shot him through the arm twice, had cut his head in a dozen places, and would have conquered him had a body of cavalry not been heard galloping down from the Champ de Mars. Fearing the soldiers almost as much as the communists, he had concealed himself until they passed and then dragged himself thither.

There wasn't much to make the most sanguine hopeful of the return of the other two. Philip, however, seemed to think it probable.

"You may be sure that if there is any thing that presence of mind, fertile resource and daring can do to rescue Elliot, Gray will bring him home. Such a spirit I never met. He handled his patriot comrades like a master with his school about him. He kept them in good humor, told the drollest stories, and I believe if he had asked our immediate companions to accept his leadership and attempt the storming of Roquette, he would have got a hundred to volunteer. I'll stake my head that he is with Elliot at this moment; and I'll lay my sound arm against a rabbit that they'll both be in this house before the week's out."

The invalid endured with great composure the siege of hysterical hugs this stout faith elicited from two pairs of white arms, while the hardly less agitated mother and Kate soothed him with less demonstrative caresses. Theo came in with the great news of the decisive movement of the day that was going to bring the crisis to a climax. Philip listened to the plan of operations, and asked the doctor ruefully if he could not patch him together long enough to enable him to go to the rescue of his friends in double peril from com-

munist rage and Versaillaise vengeance. The medical man pronounced such a thing simple suicide. He could not hold out to ride a square.

"But I might hold out in a cab."

"You would be quite useless, you would be in a dead faint from concussion, and could not recognize your friends."

Philip closed his eyes hopelessly. But when the tyrant had gone he whispered to Bella to find out from Theo the place of operations, and to come to him alone to combine a last effort to snatch the young men from their complicated perils. As Bella looked from the windows the sound of musketry came in crackling volleys from the direction of the Place de la Concorde, broken by the harsh grating of mitrailleuse. In the intervals loud salvos of cannon shook the window panes, till they rattled like thick paper. Heavy clouds of smoke fell from over head, as if the demons of earth had taken to the air and were making a battle-ground of these sulphurous vapors. Theo was full of the impending carnage, and she had the whole audience to herself.

Jules came in during her animated narrative, and seizing an opportunity unseen by his sister, Bella beckoned him into an alcove, where she had been watching the troops passing the end of the street below. She gave the young man her hand, which was hot and trembling, and looking in his eyes beseechingly, spoke, keeping her voice at a pitch which should not attract Theo; for though I can not pretend to explain it, I think she had a suspicion of the girl's monstrous indifference, if not worse, to the perils of Elliot and Trajan. Kate, perhaps, had given the germ of it to her mind, for that acute physiognomist had roundly declared that Jezebel seemed to gloat in the deadly danger after she learned that Céleste was in prison.

"Jules, you feel kindly toward me, I know. I can't pretend not to know it; you would do something generous for me, wouldn't you—if—if I asked you?"

"I would die for you, Bella, if you could ask it and it would bring you happiness—I—I——"

"Oh, Jules, you must not hope in that sense, you know that can never be. I told you that long ago. I can be a friend, but—but—don't talk of this now, it seems such wickedness, when all I hold dear are in such deadly danger. You are Trajan's friend—the noblest of men; you are Elliot's oldest friend in Paris. Pledge me to be the first in La Roquette, pledge me to see that if they escape the commune they shall be saved from the rage of the army."

Jules breathed hard; Theo was right, it was Trajan that Bella's heart beat for. She had named him first. It was plain that it was love for him and not Elliot that prompted this despairing appeal. All his old confidence in Theo's arts came back with a rush of penitent hope. Trajan living would be no impediment. Theo, whose quick eye had detected the relation, would be equal to keeping the two apart and he would be all the stronger with Bella by acting the part of heroic evangel.

"Whatever a man can do to bring Trajan and Elliot safe to this house, I will do, have no fear. I promise you to neither rest nor sleep until I am in the prison with the soldiers at my back."

She looked in his eyes, her own brimming with tears, and lifted his hand to her lips, murmuring:

"God bless you for that assurance; it is given as I knew you would give it. Pray lose no time; our hearts are torn every instant these guns sound, lest harm should be coming to those we love." She went to a table where blooming lilacs had been placed in vases, and plucking a spray, to which a dainty sprig of lily of the valley and pink mignonette were added, she tied them together, and fastening them in his lappel, said with a sad smile:

"There, Sir Knight, are your lady's colors, see that they are not dishonored."

Theo had lost none of this by-play; she had a dim com-

prehension of its meaning, and as Jules was leaving the room she ran after him.

"You have made a breach—the fort is to surrender—you are decorated with the sign of victory, the tri-color, love's gage, and your country's flag."

Jules looked at her. "No, Theo, it is not love's badge just yet, but I mean to make it that. You were right about Bella; it is Trajan she loves, and she has sent me to his rescue, and I am going to do it or die."

She looked at him in triumphant admiration. Even on the brink of the abyss that his purpose opened to her future, she swelled in proud adoration. There was no treason in his devotion. He went willingly to the burial of his own hopes and the ruin of her projects.

"You are a grand fellow, Jules. I worship you."

He embraced her passionately, and as the tears rushed to his eyes he said chokingly:

"Thank God, Theo, I go with this comfort in my heart. I was afraid that—that—"

"That I would dissuade you from acting like a man and a friend. Oh, Jules, how could you misjudge me so shamefully?"

"Thank God, it was misjudgment, little woman. Let us never speak of it again."

They were in the street and he couldn't let her go home alone among marching men and the scurrying cavalry.

"Wouldn't it be better for you to remain with the Ardens and try to comfort them?" he asked, looking about uneasily. "I shall be losing precious time going so far as the house."

"No, come with me a few squares, perhaps we shall meet some of our friends and I can get some one of them to escort me; at any rate when we reach the river I shall have no fears."

A horrible doubt of her sincerity again came in his mind as they hurried forward, but he said nothing. As they advanced the soldiers diminished, and when they emerged

under the snowy blossoms of the Cours de la Reine, groups of the staff were loitering under the trees.

"Ah, there is Captain Allard, he will relieve you, Jules. I can depend on him for an escort. Call him."

The captain, with Theo's colors conspicuous among his military decorations, came forward with alacrity.

Jules had no sooner confided his sister to the adoring Mars, than with a hasty kiss he hurried down the river bank to the Place de la Concorde, where a bedlam of firing was heard.

"He's a silly fellow, that *cher frère* of mine," Theo said, dazzling the young officer by a bewildering glance. "Do you know that he has allowed the tears and prayers of a desolate demoiselle to exact his promise to rescue our communard friend. I am in terror lest his rashness may lead him into a scrape. Will you not see that he is guarded when—when—La Roquette is reached?" and she squeezed a tear from the corner of each enchanting eye.

"Ah, mademoiselle, you humiliate me by those tears. All who are dear to you shall be guarded. Be sure Monsieur Jules will not be permitted to rush into danger until the vengeance of order is complete." He was rewarded by the most bewitching little glance of pensive reassurance and declared that he was *desolé* that duty deprived him of the joy of accompanying the distressed sister home. She turned and saw him waving his plumes as she passed out of sight, under escort of a tall orderly clanking along behind her.

She tripped homeward buoyant and light of heart. The cannon boomed from the Palais Bourbon. She could see the red glare as the guns spat out their Tartarean fires; it was a salvo to her coming glory; screeching shells, curved in misty parabolic flight over the trees and the river and fell in the Place de la Concorde; it was the aureole in the horizon of her triumph; harsh, ratcheting, scraping, as of all the mills in Hades grating against grinding fragments of iron, the symphony of the mitrailleuse; this she

could not reconcile in the roseate picture, and she stopped to shudder.

The boom of the guns, the spasmodic crackling of musketry, the appalling grind of the mitrailleuse sounded all day from the same demon-contested spot; the night came in with all the banners of hate, rage, revenge, despair and massacre flung in blood red flame across the heavens. Pillars of crimson fire uprose like giant figures of wrath from three-quarters of the doomed city. The furies had mounted the battlements and hate held them in her bloody hand. Death stood as arbiter claiming the repentant as well as the resistant, consigning each mangled and desecrated to the same limbo of ignoble oblivion.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

IN LA ROQUETTE.

TORTURED by the burden of his fear that Elliot in his new madness would destroy the chance fortune had given him, Trajan crouched in the darkness, uncertain whether to make an effort for his own life or not. If Elliot persisted in his purpose and came back to the cell, all chance for either of them would be gone. But for Elliot's safety some one must be in the cell when the keeper opened it an hour later. Elliot's change from blonde to brunette made it possible for him to deceive any thing but close scrutiny.

The two were nearly the same stature, and in such confusion as marked the last days of the patriots' administration, the light eyes of Arden would not be remarked or the sudden change to black. Provided Elliot did not persist in his marplot purpose, the key in his possession might give him an opportunity to escape. At any rate to return to the cell was the only present safety. He could denounce Elliot as a madman if he came to undo the work he had begun.

He breathed with a sort of tranquil satisfaction as he sank down on the cot where Elliot had passed a day and night of terror.

Worn out by the fatigue of the days he had endured without rest, he did not awake until the turnkey passed on his second tour—ten o'clock in the morning. He confronted the official fearlessly now, for he had not seen him before and suspected that he was a new comer. Trajan wondering why he had been allowed to sleep so long, asked the keeper if there was no breakfast for him. The man laughed, answering significantly:

"You will be let out soon, don't give yourself any uneasiness about food. The patriots have none to spare now—since the Versaillaise have entered the city!"

This explained the change in the routine, and Trajan didn't know whether to rejoice or fear. He knew what the "letting out" meant. It was the hideous buffoonery of the assassins, signifying shooting. He had seen scores, happy in the delusion of liberation thus announced to them, marched upon ambuscades of musketry and drawn bayonets.

The glowing sunshine of the 24th of May stole in through the long narrow slits far above the dungeon. The priests in the cells opposite were absorbed in devotion. The gray hair of the poor old archbishop could be seen, like the pale shade of a martyr's crown, as he kneeled by his miserable cot. For a half hour during the afternoon the priests and Judge Bonjean were taken out and permitted to descend to the prison garden for air and recreation. It was a touching spectacle, as the six, whom every one knew were doomed, walked calmly down the great corridor, the guards insulting and berating them. They bore the curses and even blows with saintly meekness—one of them, a handsome young priest, provoking the buffets upon himself, that the sacred person of the prelate might be spared.

The prison shook at times with the explosions that seemed to come from a not distant quarter. Every one realized that

a decisive movement was at hand. The chance of Elliot's doing any thing desperate diminished with every hour, and Trajan began to think of a means of flying to the succor he knew to be near. If he could have seen or signaled the old keeper, whom he knew to be a foe to the commune at heart, he would have asked him to lend him assistance. But the man was nowhere to be seen. The corridors began to fill with unfamiliar uniforms. At seven o'clock, when the first friendly dimness was settling over the gloomy towers, a loud shouting was heard at the end of the prison, toward the stairs.

A group of scarlet-sashed personages tramped in, and behind them a mob of reeling gesticulating figures. Trajan's heart leaped to his throat ; among them he saw a dozen not in uniform. He was saved. He could when the friendly darkness became thick enough, mingle with these and take his chances for flying to the soldiers. He could not contain his impatience. Had he the key? Yes, safe. Would it work? His hands shook with excitement. He dared not try it in the lock. He listened eagerly. A great glare of light suddenly came in wavering streaks from the direction of the vestibule. Heavy steps sounded nearer and nearer and nearer. Heavens, could it be Elliot coming to bring ruin, now that release was in sight? Under the over-mastering fear of it, he thrust his hand through the bars, resolved to fly and be himself shot down before the foolish fellow could compromise himself. A voice in the next cell arrested his movement.

"My God, it is Ferré! The priests will be slaughtered!"

The marching group had now come in direct range of Trajan's cell. Sure enough! There was the young miscreant he had exposed as a thief in the club. His glasses were still on his eyes, secured by a gold chain, instead of the paper cord he had worn in his student days. His slim body was gorgeous in a closely fitting Prince Albert of white cloth ; the scarlet insignia of his office passed diagonally over his

shoulder. He was flanked by fellow dignitaries, and with these again crowded by a howling bedlam of guards of all descriptions—drunk with madness or liquor—probably both —insatiable now for blood, as the dream of pillage drew to a term. Ranging themselves midway between Trajan's and the priests' cells, Ferré commanded silence, and holding a paper lavishly blotched with red ink, called out as the turnkey threw the doors open.

"Georges Darboy, calling himself servant of a person named God!" He paused.

From cell 23, the aged archbishop came out into the hideous mass of anarchy, for a moment silent. His purple soutane covered his emaciated figure. His hands hung beside him. He came quite forward to his assassins and bowing his head meekly waited! Shading his eyes with the paper, held as a screen, Ferré gave the pathetic figure a verifying glance and then resumed the fearful roll call.

"Gaspard Déguerrey, *soi disant serviteur d'un nommé Dieu!*" the voice tranquil, decisive and egotistically prolonged, as if the assassin called the mob to remark the confidence with which he swept these instruments of superstition from the path of the people.

At the call, an aged man, past his eightieth year, dragged his poor old limbs tremblingly forward, and, like the bishop, answered simply and meekly:

"Here."

Then came the *nommé* Léon De Coudray—a large fine-looking man in middle life, rector of the School of St. Geneviève, and a Jesuit. There was no meekness in the resonant —"*me voici*," with which he answered his name, nor quailing in the glance of derisive contempt with which he swept the tatterdemalion mob, whose eyes flamed in impatient ferocity for his audacious blood.

Alexis Clerc, a brother Jesuit, hastened from his cell, with a buoyant step and sparkling eye. He was still a mere boy —having but just attained orders. He had coveted martyr-

dom since his novitiate, and now that the crown was in his sight he was joyous as the lover before the rose garlands of the marriage feast. A murmur ran through the reeking mass of lust and murder as the young handsome face became visible; but Ferré, repressing the outbreak by a terrible "Silence, citoyens!" proceeded to the end of the list marked for sacrifice.

The last of the five names called was Louis Bonjean, president of the "Cour de Cassation," a man in vigorous old age, who was put among the hostages through private spite of lawyers in the commune against whom he had made decisions in other years. The list complete, Ferré gave the order to march the victims, two by two, and the archbishop, leaning on the arm of the judge, was last in the line.

To Trajan's unspeakable surprise, instead of retracing the way they had come, Ferré led the soldiers toward the narrow cylinder staircase, within a few yards of the scene that had just passed. Now, if ever, was the time for him to make use of the key. The flaming torches of petroleum passed to the front, on a call from Ferré, to light the dark stairs.

In the friendly gloom thus flung over the corridor, the door was softly opened and in two minutes Trajan was mingling with the mob, pushing and jostling down the narrow corkscrew stairs. When pressed forward by the eager throng behind, he reached the landing on the second floor, Ferré was enforcing order and selecting the firing party. The first spot selected was found to be in full view of the invalids in the infirmary, whose heads were thrust against the grating; for some reason the place was deemed inappropriate and the cortège, retracing its steps, came out in the broad court of the prison. While some one went forward to unlock the iron gates leading to a smaller paved court, the archbishop leaned wearily against the railings. It was a sepulchral spectacle. What with the darkness of the night and the thick blackness of the smoke settling in fantastic shapes

over the awful work, the deed and its surroundings were in ghastly sympathy. The flaming torches threw just enough light to give the scene diabolic outline and atmosphere. At the bend in the wide avenue running around the interior building the party came to a final halt.

In all the horror of his own critical position, Trajan felt an instinctive sense of guilt in being one, even involuntarily, of this sacrilegious massacre. He had only escaped Ferré's clutches by causing his friends in the "Treize" to circulate the rumor that Gray was still in Spain with Gambetta. Ferré had denounced him to the Committee of Public Safety and he had been declared *hors la loi*, any patriot bringing his head to the committee would be rewarded by the *patrie*. His mind was divided between the nearness of his own and Elliot's danger and the anguish of the scene. He scrutinized as closely as he dared the hideous faces about him in search of Elliot, dreading an imprudent exclamation on the latter's part should he suddenly recognize his rescuer.

The prisoners were placed in a row, their backs against the wall. As the bishop was hustled roughly into place, with a gentle movement he arrested the steps of his guards, and, turning to the group, now motionless, said, with an accent of sincerity that drew tears on many an eye:

"My children!—I freely forgive you. If the cause of my Master can be served in this sacrifice, I surrender my short remaining space of life as gladly as I have devoted fifty years to his sublime ministry. But my heart aches for you—I know you do not know what you do, and I pray the good God that this may not be visited upon you—I—"

But here, with a brutal curse, Ferré ordered the crowd to clamor the benignant voice into silence. At this, moved beyond resistance, two of the guards fell on their knees imploring the martyr's blessing.

Outraged by such pusillanimity and surrender to the superstition of the *nommé* God, the mob of guards, with

Ferré at their head, seized the recalcitrants and whisked them away under a volley of such frightful blasphemy as the French language alone seems the fit vehicle for.

Trajan could not believe that the scene was real. The figures swam before his eyes. The savage guards, the revolting jests and scurrilities, the priests ranged in line along the wall. Surely, it was a phantom horror that was pranking in this devil's comedy before him! No! The victims stand erect; the priests, with clasped hands, are praying; the glistening barrels are raised on a line; the hoarse clamor is hushed; the figure of Ferré, rigid, satanic, jocose, looms up under the spluttering flame—

"Make ready—fire!"

A cry of horror, a confused gurgling of insatiable execration, a demon chorus of exultant joy, possible to no human throats,—and the figures at the wall lie a confused mass. But they have not met the mercy of swift death. There is a gasping movement in the tortured heap—another volley is fired, then straggling shots, as if to prolong the delights of it; and then Ferré himself, to mark his place in the tragedy, runs to the mass, and planting his pistol on the gray hairs of the bishop, fires the last shot.

Some ran shrieking from the scene, others moved solemnly away. The guards were formed in confused order the mob was driven before them, and the place left in darkness—Cimmerian—terrifying. Horror was in the air, thick, choking, blinding. The guilty mob fled, and Trajan was borne with them, through the wide roadway, through the gloomy passages, into the great court, where the first-comers looked back in dread, as if they expected to see the bloody corpses, with the whips and scorpions of vengeance upborn in their dead hands. Trajan knew that his own, perhaps Elliot's, escape depended on preserving his sanity in this phantasmal place of horror. He set about the quest for the missing.

But the confusion made his task a slow one. It was midnight and he had not seen the figure in the uniform he knew

so well. There was no longer even the semblance of discipline in the place. A howling mob, drunken and brutal, passed along the cells, firing pistols at random in the darkness.

From time to time Lefrançais, the gaoler, received despatches which he read with imprecations so dire that those near him shrank back, the satyr leer fading into fear. Twice patriots ran along the corridors, bidding the miserable prisoners make ready to come forth, but they were not molested. It was just after the stroke of midnight that a rush was made toward the central gate. The wan and haggard throng pressed toward a hurdle which left a stream of crimson on the stones as the carriers jolted it savagely along, shouting impious snatch and ribald gibes. A fold of rich shining purple fell over the rough handles of the frame, dragging its golden bullion fringe on the floor. The mangled bodies were going to Père La Chaise, to be flung in a confused heap for sepulture, where, four days later, reverent hands uncovered them for burial amid lamentation and tears.

Morning came, but still no sign of Elliot, and Trajan began to count on an effort to break from the place. He had purloined from sleeping patriots a military jacket, a kepi and sword, and felt tolerably secure. He dreaded assignment to such duty as he had seen done by some of the men with a reluctance that had brought upon them blows from the outraged patriots. Surely Elliot must have escaped.

He would not, with all his generous heedlessness, have lingered in this death-trap, possible as it was by a ready bit of invention to take advantage of the lax discipline to pass out. He watched the entrance, resolving to seize the first pretext to slip away. But the laxity prevailing inside did not rule at the gates. Here a company of Algerian soldiers, fidelity itself to an order once given, savagely thrust every one back who came without written evidence of liberty to go out. Faint with hunger—nothing had been distributed for twenty-four hours—he could barely drag his weary limbs

along the cold pavement. Noon came, and still no sign; bedlam surging about him. Darkness fell; he lay on the floor in a stupor; his mind wandered. How long he lay thus he could not tell: when his eyes opened it was daylight, and he was in a soft, luxurious bed. "It is a dream," he murmured, and closed his eyes. Faint whispers sounded like music in his ears. "Somebody" stood bending over him.

"Somebody's" lips were on his forehead. "Somebody's" hands were smoothing back his hair. Wonderful dream! He dared not move—he dared not breathe—it would break the spell. But "Somebody," in most undreamlike and corporeal might, was forcing his lips open and pouring an undreamlike and unambrosial fluid down his throat. Even a dream has its amenities, and he caught the bodily hand and staring with all his might, saw that it was no dream, and that Edith was really beside him. If you can not guess the ocular demonstrations he pretended were needed to convince him that she was not a blessed ghost, you have not the susceptibilities needed to realize episodes like this, and I haven't the patience to waste time on you. I will say, however, that I never knew of a dialogue carried on so long in the dumb but eloquent language of lips without words. But it came to an end at last, and as the dreamer realized the scene, there was such a tableau as he had never expected to see again.

Who should be standing at the foot of the bed but Elliot, behind him Philip, and seated in great composure, as though scenes of this sort were incidents of their daily existence,—Mrs. Arden, rosy, placid and smiling as ever; Mrs. Briscoe, with a lap filled with letters, which she seemed in no hurry to read; Kate, gazing at the astonished dreamer in a way to make him blush. Bella was invisible only because Trajan was not gifted with eyes in the top of his head like a polypus —the earth and not the sky being the scene of his endeavors. Bella had been holding the invalid's head, while "Some-

body" had inserted the silver spoon with the unnnectar-like flavor. Trajan fell back and closed his eyes.

"Come, now, old fellow, that's 'possum—you needn't expect any more baby-feeding. Own up, like a man—you are as well as you ever were." And Elliot's voice confirmed the realism of the scene.

"It was fear that you would all vanish," replied the culprit, apologetically; whereat there was a great shout of laughter. "But explain it all."

"Not just yet, Mr. Absolute; the doctor says you are to do nothing but eat for a week."

"Then I shall fly back to Roquette, for I have a horror of being fat. That's a good fellow, Elliot, tell me how—how—"

"How we got out of that pit of Hell? Bella is shaking her head like an aspen in a gale of wind; but I will relieve your anxiety, as I am told that an anxious spirit preys upon the health, and merely in the doctor's interest I will tell you. First, sir, every member of this family agrees that you acted like a—a—wretch in forcing the brand of caitiff upon the head of the Ardens." (Wild exclamations of indignant denial, and a squeeze from a certain hand.) "Applause from the audience over a sentiment striking as true," continued Elliot, narrating:

"When the head of the Ardens found himself thrown out of the patrimonial halls—that is to say, the patriot's cell—his heart, like his head, was filled with remorse, shame, anguish, and the resolve to make two people die where one would have satisfied the holy cause of the *patrie!*

"He was, however, still strong enough in the canny virtues of his kinswoman, the immortal Kate McNair—whom *voici*"—and he bowed to that crimson relic of the blood of Knox—"he—the Arden—mingled in patriotic joviality with his *camarades* of the Avengers of Flourens, and was by rank and circumstances given a chief place in the roll-call, answering with sonorous vehemence to the name of Légare; deter-

mined to seize the real Légare by the collar so soon as he appeared, and thrust him incontinently from the hospitable, though confining walls put at his disposal by the *patrie.*

"Various duties, however, obtruded to make it impossible to keep as diligent watch for the recreant Légare as the urgency of the case demanded. The Arden was denied the ancestral right of inspecting the interior of his domains. It was late in the evening when, near the outer gate, he heard a great clamor. A group of the foes of the people had just passed out of the gate under some Satanic pretext. The son of Arden, knowing the slippery methods of Légare, felt at once that he was among this scandalous party—four of them, he learned from the guard, who for the moment was alone at the gate.

"In an instant, the Arden was in pursuit, with two other patriots besides. The four runaways were caught, not by the guards, but by intelligent people who knew that no well-behaved citizen should run at such a time. But among the wretched fellows no Légare was found. Taken back to the prison by some unaccountable stupidity Arden's prisoner escaped, and with him a note addressed to any friendly hand that it might fall into in the Rue François Premier, to send succor, if that were possible, to La Roquette. But the good intentions of Arden were taken at high value, and he was placed on guard at the door. Here he overheard Ferré, the host, in a sense, of Roquette, confide to his slave Lefrançais that it was all up with the game, that Attila's forces were near the Hotel de Ville, that a last blow alone remained, and that the drama was to be made heroic, sublime, he said, by shooting the six hostages that night. If the army were at the Hotel de Ville, it was within a few minutes' march of Roquette. A cordon had been stretched across the inner court, at the foot of the grand stairway, with charge to let no one pass but the chiefs of Communes girt in their sanguinary insignia.

"Here was an assurance that the delinquent Légare was

measurably secure, and when, at midnight, his compatriot came to relieve him, the son of Arden was gone. A dozen times as he dodged his way down the Rue St. Antoine and made a great detour to the river to avoid the barricaded center of action, the Bastille, his heart misgave him and he repented the wild security of Roquette. He was jostled by patriots and challenged by them, and blinded by the explosions of petroleum, which was just then the beverage of the ladies he met. Lines of fire girded him; the horizon was a series of bursting Vesuvii in the direction of the east and south.

"As he pushed onward shells fell in hurtling splinters, knocking walls and balconies, and even bodies, into the street. The Hotel de Ville was spitting out tongues of flame as he passed it; mysterious figures with little casks were moving in and out among its stately arches; more of them were flitting about the colonnades of the Louvre. It was broad daylight now, and the Arden was seized by a patrol and set to defend a barrier in the Rue St. Antoine. The Arden didn't fight with the hearty good will of his comrades, and when the cry came that the barricade was turned, he fled toward the enemy instead of from them. But the enemy were nowhere visible, and flying into the maze of winding streets in the Marais, it was late in the afternoon before he recognized the locality in the neighborhood of the Bourse.

"Heaps of dead lay on all sides—most of them bayoneted. Coming out in the Place Vendôme, he was among troops of the line. He had thrown away the picturesque but obtrusive raiment thrust upon him by Légare in the cell of La Roquette, and his shirt sleeves enabled him to mingle among the "saviours," as he heard the grimy, blood-stained veterans endearingly called, by the crowds that would have burned them in petroleum the day before, and boiled any one who mourned them in tears. A woman, clad in the picturesque costume of the Amazons of the Seine—beautiful, as she devils can sometimes be, was dragged forward from the Palais de Jus-

tice, where she had been secreted. She faced the jeering cowards with dauntless courage. Men pricked her body with the tips of bayonets; women, who had probably admired, envied and cheered her the day before, spat in her handsome, daring face. Officers stood by commenting critically on her fine points, but never offered to interfere.

"One ruffian in uniform came up and woman-like spat at her; quick as lightning, she seized a bayonet and thrust it deep into the wretch's neck. In an instant twenty bullets were in her body, and she sank in a heap to the pavement.

"Twenty encouraging scenes like this came under these eyes, revealing the cowardice, cruelty, ferocity of the law and order mob, which has vanquished the lawless and disorderly mob. But as you are impatient, Monsieur Légare—for we citizen each other no more—I will pass over details, which I mean to give you in the form of affidavits, to publish in your great work on the commune, proving the equal criminality of the two mobs—the Versaillaise and the commune. With this difference, we, the citoyens, slaughtered for an idea, the Attilas for revenge—one for a principle, the other for concealment—for since you last looked on Paris, Citizen Légare, thirty thousand men, women and children have gone where the love of humanity is no crime.

"The Arden, sick to his soul of this monstrous epilogue of horror, inquired for the quarters of General Vinoy. It was in the Rue Gabrielle, but the devils still held the Madelaine. Passing on through the Boulevard des Capucines, the firing was still going on. Near the Grand Hotel a dead soldier lay with his coat over his body; to secure himself from molestation, Arden donned it and made his way more confidently. The "devils" had been driven from the Rue Royal into the church. Curiosity led Arden inside as the soldiers closed in, for he heard with amazement volleys from the sacred interior, where for fifty years aristocratic Paris has been married and given in marriage, christened and sent to the tomb.

"Tongue refuses to tell the grisly horror that desecrated this majestic temple—perhaps three hundred wretched fugitives had fled thither for refuge, trusting the holy limits for immunity. Then began a chase and butchery the tongue revolts to outline. A group of women, some gray-haired, but all of them women, fell before the grand altar supplicating mercy. The bayonet and the bullet answered them. In their fury the soldiers shot their own comrades, as the cowering victims dragged themselves bleeding to their butchers' feet. On the grand altar a little curly headed child—in happier times one would have taken it for one of the strayed cherubim—was pinned to the chalice sanctuary with a sword bayonet, its little arms stretching toward the murdering monster like two pinionless wings.

"The floor—marble, as you remember—ran in gore. There was not a living person left but the soldiers when I ran down the wide stone stairs clotted with blood. Well, let this and a thousand fold more as bad, pass, until the time comes to tell it. I reached Vinoy. He knew me as Philip's kinsman, and put me in communication with Captain Allard, of Douay's staff, who was to take charge of La Roquette so soon as rescued. This was a trying point for the constancy of the son of Arden"—and as he said this, Bella stole to his side —"for he could now have been in the Rue François Premier in ten minutes—but he remembered he had not left his card with the citizen Légare. He sent a messenger to this mansion, and I am told there was as much joy over the return of this one sinner as all Paris has shown at an army of them!

"When I informed Captain Allard of the project to murder the archbishop, instant orders were issued to advance on La Roquette. We got there too late. It was night. All the cells were open. To my amazement, the very first thing Allard did was to call for the register. He looked through the names, but not finding what he seemed in search of, he called the old keeper, you remember, who had been in the

place for years. He had secreted himself before the shooting of the hostages, and only reappeared with the army.

"'Gray—the Communard—what became of him?' asked Allard.

"'I know of no such name—'

"'Oh, I can explain,' and I told him the good turn Réné had done you, and that you were the very Légare I was in search of. Allard looked at me very hard and asked: 'Do you know, monsieur, that this Gray is one of the most infamous and most murderous of this vile horde?'

"I allowed with some natural emphasis, considering certain things that I knew, that Gray was any thing but the monster the gallant captain had been made to believe him. But the hero was not to be convinced; he gave orders that the odious Légare was to be shot on sight, and bade the keeper, who alone knew him, to search every nook and corner for him.

"He even had a photograph of you, so dangerous are you to society, and with this in his hand scrutinized a hundred of the released prisoners. But you were not among them. Jules Carnot, who had entered with us, set out on a quest of his own. The keepers on the lower floor informed him that there were a score of madmen confined in the office, as there had been no place in the cells, crowded with fifteen hundred prisoners. Among these madmen Jules found the citizen Légare, babbling soft nothings to a poor old man, who had lost daughter and son, one in the Prussian siege, one on the barricades serving as an Amazon. Jules rushed to the son of Arden, who was wildly ransacking the habiliments of the rejoicing crowd, and shouted:

"'I have found him; Trajan's here safe.' 'Found whom?' asked Allard eagerly, as he came with the picture in his hand, comparing it with the woe-begone faces passing before him.

"'My servant, captain,' responded the unabashed Arden, looking that suspicious officer in the eye. 'Let me go for

him,' Arden whispered, as Jules in astonishment looked from one to the other. When the matter was explained to Jules he trembled and turned ghastly. I declare I never dreamed he was so sensitive, or thought so much of you"—and he looked slyly at Bella as he said this. "A quite harmless madman who was indifferent to the name put upon him satisfied the captain's scrutiny, and a half hour later Jules managed to get you out into a hastily cobbled litter, and like the Spartan brothers Josephus speaks of, we two might have been seen for the next three mortal hours toiling under the burden of your 150 pounds.

"There, so far as the historical part goes, is the story in brief of your rescue, by other hands than the Arden's. There are numerous touches, which I have not ventured to stop to paint. But I mean to write my experiences one of these days and then you shall have the psychological history of these exciting nights and days in the best manner of the new-fashioned mental anatomists."

"And so, after all, Elliot, the story ends the same way. I owe my life to your heroism now, as I owed it to your sentimental impulse a year ago." Trajan stretched out his feeble hand.

Six people may all talk at once and manage to make the babel passably entertaining, if only as an exercise of the lungs, but the most stenographic pen, or myriad-minded writer, is unable to reproduce, even phonetically, what would seem of coherent interest to the reader.

First, Trajan's allusion had enlivened unextinguishable curiosity in two busy brains, and Edith, besetting the invalid, extorted a whispered promise to tell all about it, while Bella, with an imperative gesture, indicated her will to be instantly apprised of the true intent of the mysterious speech. When the little tale was told over in the corner, quite secure from the other by no means prying eyes, with much soft embracing and gentle gurgles of delight, the largest share of the "adoration" kept in the sentimental

corner of Bella's heart, was instantly transferred to Elliot, with a feminine indifference to consistency which charmed, while it amazed the rapturously enshrined idol. Mrs. Arden, confident that the artless Edith would keep no secret from her mother, repressed her natural impatience.

"I say, Trajan, even at your own gauge I'm still in your debt a life or two; I should have been shot at Meaux if you hadn't gulled that good-natured Saxon—whom, by the way, I mean to remember one of these days, in a way that will delight his *schätzchen*—then again in La Roquette; beside the burden on me as head of the Ardens in denying the Rothschild bull the gory pleasure of stamping out Bella! I think you will call it quits if I give you a mother-in-law, and —and—"

"Elliot—for shame! Have you lost all sense of delicacy?" reproved his mother, with a placid tone that deprived the reprimand of its efficacy.

"You mean that your consent has not been asked. Innocent Arden that you are! Don't you know that this sanguinary person, lying so peacefully in my bed, is a communist; that his creed decrees the equal partition of treasure? Well, we are your treasures; I represent the Kohinoor diamond."

"Or the Pitt," suggested Philip.

"Either will cover the case. Edith represents—well she represents some great Indian pearl, let us say—"

"Hence aunt Cordelia is mother of pearl," amended Philip.

"Well—no—Phil, that's most too attenuated even for sick-room wit. Well, as I was explaining, Trajan takes half your treasure and leaves me as the least valuable of the spoil."

And so it was from grave to gay, and every body got ready to quit the scene of so much that was sinister even in this joy. 'Twas Bella who had the last pang to bear, that comes under the cognizance of this historian. While every thing

was in the confusion of packing Jules called and asked for Bella. She went into the library and received him with gentle affection. She knew what he was going to say, and he, poor fellow, knew what she was going to answer. He had redeemed not only his own but Theo's past, in her eyes, by his loyalty at Roquette; and all that his conduct meant there she was never to know. But suspecting much of other things, she was deeply moved by his manfully-controlled grief, and told him as tenderly as a "no" to a lover can be told, that she had loved her cousin since she was a child. That she had sometimes misunderstood the force of that love, but that she knew what it meant when it came to peril. They, she and Jules, should meet again across the water, when he had happily given some worthy girl his true and noble heart. And so they parted, and as Elliot saw her moistened eye when she returned to the family group he did not need to be told poor Jules' errand.

As she left the room again for the library he followed her.

"Bella, you remember what you said to me the other day?"

"Among the many wise sayings I am called upon to lavish on you I don't recollect any particular saying, at the instant, that is more worthy than another of remembrance."

"Bella," his voice trembled now at her affected levity; "you told me you adored Trajan."

"And I told the truth; don't you?"

He took her two hands and held them, as she stood passive and blushing now.

"You are half engaged to so many people, adoring and dismissing admirers, that I have resolved to ask you a question: Suppose I should ask you whom you mean to marry, what would you say?"

"Suppose I should say the first man that asks me."

"Then I should say, Bella, dearest, can you give me a chance to show you that I am not the dolt I seem, and say you will be my wife?"

It is difficult to say what the ready-witted Bella would

have said to this, for the truth was, she couldn't very well say any thing, since two lips, however flexible, are unable to even murmur when two other lips press them too closely. How long this curious pantomime might have continued I should, in the interests of philosophy, like to know ; but a rustle as of some one retreating hastily from the door recalled the lovers to their senses—or to the possibility of speech ; and then, if the rustler were not too far off, she might have heard :

"My darling!" followed by smirking sounds tediously prolonged.

"You silly fellow!" then smirk, smirk, smirk again.

Trajan, too, was to return to his native land. Paris would never be the home of art to him again. The things he had seen and the memories of them would paralyze his pencil. The very moment Bella was laying down her arms, Trajan, ready to set out for the studio, was overtaken by Edith at the door, who found that she had an errand at the Bon Marché that would take her past the Rue Dragon. As the cab crawled over the streets, still filled with the wreck of the two sieges, Trajan said suddenly :

"If we could only get a marguerite now, I could fulfill the conditions you prescribed at the Lovers' Well. Couldn't you teach me the words without the flower?"

"What a simpleton! of course not. But would you really like to learn it?"

"Rapture would be no name for the joy of initiation. Can't we drive to the market and get some marguerites?"

"Well, since you're really sincere and not teasing, perhaps I'll gratify you, but you don't deserve such indulgence, for I'm sure you're laughing ; aren't you?"

"I assure you the sphinxes yonder—do you see them with staring eyes?—couldn't serve as models for such solemnity as mine."

"Then I'll gratify you ; though I never meant to, you were so horrid and stupid that day at Crécy."

"Why at Crécy? I supposed that I was always stupid, but flattered myself I was not horrid!"

Edith, skeptically—"I believe you're laughing. If I thought you were, you should never see something I've got."

Trajan, woebegone as to countenance—"Belisarius at the gate never felt the wretchedness I now feel; be merciful."

"You have really caught the tricks of my good-for-nothing brother and I shan't open my mouth again—no—I shan't—I won't be trifled with."

"Then I must ask Madame Agay to teach me the marguerite mystery. She always has a pot of them in her window. I wonder if she consults them every day?"

"Of course not; she's married. It's only when one's in love one asks the marguerite if one is to be lucky."

"Then I'll not rest until I've consulted the flower; driver, please hasten."

At this "Somebody" laughing and turning all sorts of colors, takes a little silken thing from a receptacle mysteriously hidden above her waist, and opening it, brings forth a withered flower, quite sere and of no distinguishable color. Belisarius regards it in comic wonder, but subdues the expression to respectful curiosity, as "Somebody's" eyes look into his questioningly:

"What is it, an amulet to exorcise evil persons and deeds?"

"Do you think you would be here if it were?"

"That's true. What is it then?"

"Don't you recognize it. No, no! You mustn't take it, it would fall in pieces! You put it in your pocket that day at Crécy, to use when you found out the name of the girl you wanted to marry."

"How lucky! I need it now, for I found out that very day. I wondered where it had gone. Perhaps you have already asked it? What did it say?"

"Of course I didn't ask it, the lover must do that?"

"Very well. Oh little faded, blood-stained flower, that has nestled on the purest heart in all the world, what is the name

of the loveliest creature that ever made a painter abhor his art, because it falls so far short of embodying her? Answer me, faded flower that grew in beauty in green fields, and unlike the human, reached Heaven without changing form!"

"How absurd of you!" says "Somebody" with glistening eyes. "The flower doesn't answer the question that way. You must think of the name of the girl you love."

"I've thought of nothing else for five months."

"Yes, but you must name the flower by her name."

"I did so long ago—I called it Angel."

"What a plague you are—her own very name, I mean."

"Well, let's call her—"

"Stop, you mustn't tell,—that is, not now—think it."

"Very well, I'm doing my best to recall it, but it's a struggle. Don't keep me in suspense!"

"Now I'll touch the leaves. I won't tear them out, because when you've found out whether she loves you or not, you'll have to give her the flower."

"Very well, keep it!"

"*Je t'aime* (mind, it's the girl the flower is talking for)—*beaucoup;—passionment—pas de tout*—there—the last leaf on the last round tells the story, it says she loves you passionately!"

"I knew that."

"You egotistical fellow!"

"I thought flowers told the marriage day. I don't think much of it, do you?"

"Yes, I think very much of it, for it told me something when somebody himself didn't know it!"

"What did it tell you?"

"It told me that somebody loved me 'very much' that day at Crécy and it came true!"

"Dear me, what a wonderful flower!" Then the street being narrow—they were on the Rue Dragon—there were goings on that would have surprised the respectable bourgeoisie in any other quarter of the city.

"Don't lose the flower, Edith, in case I should forget the name," Trajan said, maliciously, as he alighted, flying before the scornful young person who drove onward.

Madame Agay, who had not seen her lodger for a month, was *enchanté* in the profusest form. She detained him an hour with garrulities on the trials she had undergone from *ces animaux* the communards. It was not until all these woes were set forth that Trajan was given a chance to ascend to his studio, where he was deep in the salutations of Betty and Trip, when the stout guardian came breathlessly to announce two visitors, who she said had been a dozen times to see him during the week. They wouldn't give their names, but declared that it was a matter of the utmost importance to Monsieur Gray! Indeed, while she spoke, a female voice at the door said:

"Monsieur Gray will find that he does well in seeing us," and the speaker pushed the door open and entered. There were two of them, women, evidently of the lower middle rank, plainly but handsomely dressed.

"You don't recognize us, do you, Mr. Gray?"

Trajan owned that he couldn't recall them. Requesting him to favor them with a word alone, the women took chairs and glanced at Madame Agay, who, with a defiant sniff, withdrew, fathomless meaning in the shrug of her fat shoulders.

"I am the woman whose own and whose baby's life you saved on the steamer from Havre to New York."

"What, Madame Blaye?"

"Yes, monsieur; I am come not to *ennuie* you with empty thanks, but to warn you of an odious conspiracy against you. I will be very brief. This is my sister. She is a clerk in the office of Odéon arrondissement. She lives in the Rue Auvergne. Among her friends is Céleste who was *femme de chambre* with the family Carnot on the Rue Galilée. Céleste was dismissed for some petty fault last February. She is a hot-headed, revengeful, wicked girl; but that's neither here nor there. She nursed her

revenge until her chance came. Under the commune she was protected by a chief who was powerful during the first few weeks. Knowing this, Céleste took a party of her friends, and under pretext of pillaging aristocrats, robbed the Carnot house. But it wasn't so much the robbery she was bent on as securing some letters of Mademoiselle Theo, some of which she had seen, before she left. These letters mainly concern you!"

"Me!" exclaimed Trajan. "How can they concern me?"

"You, Monsieur Gray. My sister here was called in to help read them, for Céleste is a poor hand at writing. The letters showed that Mademoiselle Theo had paid a girl named Nanette, to say that you had been married to her when you first came to the quarter. That you had abandoned her and her child—"

"Why it was I who saved Nanette from the workhouse!"

"Precisely. But what the letters proved you can see for yourself. What my sister found in them was more important. It so happened that they gave her a clue to a mysterious disappearance last year. A Monsieur Philip Kent had married a young girl in the Church of St. Etienne in 1863. She was of the family of the Counts of Drézé in the Rue de Blois. The marriage was kept secret. He lived with her very happily for a year, when the Prince d'Amboise seduced her from him. He never knew the seducer, but the police files show the record. So soon as the girl was safely out of Monsieur Kent's reach, documents were forwarded him, showing that he had in ignorance of the French law, made an illegal marriage. The girl herself wrote this to him. He returned to America wild with remorse and shame, after vain attempts to get his little boy. In time the prince, tiring of the girl, deserted her. She went back to her sister in the Rue Blois, but the doors were closed upon her. She was taken up by a rich Bonapartist, but in time remorse and shame drove her mad. She was sent to Bicêtre by the man,

but soon recovered the appearance of reason. She, however, was a reproach to her sister, who had her watched and thrust into the asylum whenever she could get a pretext. Her son was placed *en pension* with a relative of Céleste's sweetheart, in the Rue St. Etienne.

"One day the child was missing, and the police finding no clue to him, the poor mother went raving mad. A body was found in the Seine about the time that she disappeared, and all trace of the tragedy ends there. This concerns you only in the fact that you adopted a little boy about that time, and from the letters Céleste stole, the plot was to convict you of being its father, and destroy you with the family with whom you are in such close *rapport*. Monsieur Arden has been apprised of the facts. He was sent to the midwife, Madame Tarbes, Rue des Blancs Manteaux. She has told me and my sister the story, and declared that she was half inclined to expose the conspiracy herself, as Monsieur Arden had paid her more generously for being deceived than Mademoiselle Carnot had paid her for carrying out the conspiracy. Monsieur Gray, when you did that noble deed on the sea, I prayed that I might some time have a chance to show you that I could be grateful. I pray to the *bon Dieu* that I am not too late; that you have not been made to suffer!"

"I have suffered, and I see why now, but you have not come too late," said Trajan, in a strange calm. As the women arose to go he asked:

"Did Mademoiselle Carnot learn Mr. Kent's relations to this conspiracy?"

"No; that is a matter that my sister alone knows. All the archives are in her hands in the bureau arrondissement, where on an order from the prefect of police, you may see them."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

VIA ALLEGRO.

TRAJAN left the studio after an hour's reflection, the idea of preparing for departure driven from his mind. All the skeins in the web had come to his hands in an instant. The broken engagement of Philip in New York, of which he had heard from Papa Carnot, was now explained. Theo's diabolic purpose to humiliate the family; her persistent attempts to divide Elliot and himself. But what should he do? Bury the business as Elliot had evidently done and never allude to it? But if the boy were Philip's, could he let the little man grow up ignorant of his parentage? What had become of the letters? Into whose hands had they fallen? Céleste had been plundered of the packet, he now recollected, for that was the object of Grovel's visit in the Rue François Premier. Obviously it was his duty to acquaint Philip with what he had heard, and he could verify the story and explain the discrepancies. Philip was in his own room reading when Trajan knocked.

"Good heavens, Gray, you look more knocked up than when we were marching as patriots under the Red Flag. What is it? Have you heard of a rival carrying off a prize in your own best loved *genre*?"

"Kent, I'm going to pain you, but I don't see how I can help it. I think it the only way out of a sad business," and he told him the story, with such additional circumstantial incidents as had fallen to his own unconscious agency.

After the first violent shock, Philip listened with unmoved face. He changed color when d'Amboise's name came in, but made no comment, until the tragic error of his youth had been laid bare. He dropped his head between his hands when the story was ended and waited a long time before he made any reply. Then arising walked the room in

agitation, as if to collect his thoughts before deciding on something he was deliberating.

"I hope I have done wisely, Kent? I believed it to be for the best to let you know."

"You have acted wisely, and altogether for the best, Gray, as you always do. No; my silence was from a quite different cause."

He walked the floor again, and then seating himself, and looking away from Trajan he asked:

"You could get no confirmation of the woman's death in the Rue de Blois?"

"None. Madam Drézé treated me as if she suspected me of having some hand in her sister's misleading and death."

"The letter you found in the lilac bushes was written by my father's agent two years before. He was outraged by the marriage and thought as I did that it was legal. It was because we both thought this that I was forced to break off my engagement with Miss Carnot, as there were several people—young men of my set who knew of my relations with—with Angelique. Her desertion cured me of my infatuation—but I held myself none the less legally married to the poor girl. Had she not evaded me, I should have procured a divorce before I returned to America.

"But believing woman-like that it was through passion I was tracing her, she eluded all the efforts of the agents set on her track, and it was through them that the matter entered the police archives. My father also believed that I was in danger of succumbing to her beauty—she was wondrously beautiful—and kept constant espionage on her, so far as he could trace her, and upon me. He found out where she was, entered into correspondence, and to keep her from falling in my way wrote her that cruel letter in my name, giving her money to go to New Orleans. He told me all so soon as the letter was sent, and I have had agents there ever since, though I never believed that she had gone to America.

"She is dead. The boy, the little Amédée, you will give me without saying any thing to the family. They need never know more than that I adopt him and give him my name. You can readily disprove the calumnies Elliot has been hearing about yourself. I have the letters the woman speaks of; Gibson gave them to me to hand to Grovel, saying they contained political secrets. We will look them over and all that are needed for your exoneration you may take; that incredible little she-devil Theo deserves no consideration. It was lucky you came when you did; I was going to drive up there this afternoon and deliver them to Lafayette."

He unwound the tape and began the work of verifying the story he had just heard. But they threw light on his own episode by corroboration only. The evidence of Theo's malignly adroit handiwork in so torturing Annette's admissions as to make them fit Trajan, unless investigated by a court of law, was clear and complete. Letters of quite a different character were mixed among these disastrous memorials, but they were laid aside, so far as possible, unread. The reading, however, decided Trajan to call Elliot in and remove any doubts that he might have on the matter. Philip too became convinced that for Amédée's sake 'twere better his uncle should know the story of his birth, and 'twould be as well, he said, to tell the family. Sent for, the young man came in and colored as he saw the open letters spread over the table.

The revelation did not, he said, surprise him greatly. He had suspected that Madame Tarbes had made a mistake or aggravated the circumstances. He had fancied that Trajan, like many others he knew, had fallen into the hands of the peculiar class of sharpers always lying in wait for young foreigners and had been mystified into a mock ceremony. But when Philip followed with his more painful story, Elliot was surprised beyond words. He saw every thing. The persistent plotting of Theo to shake his own allegiance to Bella; the duel forced upon Philip by her cousin the big

guardsman ; even the masque at St. Cloud, and the harping on Arden faithlessness two years before, when the intrigue began, became plain parts of the resolute little fury's fabric of artifice. And he had helped and fired each train, as she put the torch in his hand. He grew sick with shame as the past came back, all the specters grinning at him in unveiled ghastliness.

"Great God, Trajan, to think of the figure I've cut ! Without my cursed vanity and heedlessness, all this might have been spared you. Philip might even have made amends to that unhappy victim Clare—before that little fiend entrapped her into marriage with Lafayette ! I've learned one lesson. I'll never make confidence of any thing concerning my friends, and I'll never share a secret. Do you know, sir, it was by making me believe that you were in love with Bella, that she blinded me into the fury of accepting this odious farrago ? That too, while she as good as said she would marry me, when some obstacle, she never said what, should be removed ! The obstacle, I now see from these letters, she was not sure whether to accept d'Amboise or not."

He walked the room as Philip had done, his rage choking him as the pitiful part he had been made to play grew clearer and clearer. "And ah, Trajan, you implacable old truepenny, to think that Philip owes the rescue of his boy to our casual meeting that wonderful afternoon !"

"The bread, Elliot, has returned after many days," says Trajan with reverent tone that would have alienated his commune co-disciples of the Treize. As he spoke, Edith came in, looking very much disturbed.

"Theo is in the *salon* and asks to see you, Trajan !"

"To see me," cries he trembling, "I won't see her. I won't breathe the same air with her—she is infect—she—"

"Oh, you must see her, Trajan ; you can't refuse, as she knows you are in the house," cries Elliot. "Perhaps, after all, it's better you should," he added significantly.

"If I must, so be it. Edith, if you have any desire to please me, don't go back to her; keep from the contamination of her odious presence; send a servant to show her into the library, I will go in there; stay, remain here, I will do it myself," and he rose in a good deal more trepidation than Philip had observed, when he was marched off in the *rôle* of Elliot with the patriots.

Theo came rustling into the library, in all her old spirit, in all her winning loveliness. Trajan did not go forward to meet her. He merely placed a chair and stood by one of the book-cases, where the light was behind him. Undaunted by this significant reception she proffered her bewitchingly gloved hand, which he barely touched and then withdrew his own with a shudder. She was keenly alive to his manner and penetrated him with her inscrutable eyes. "Is it jealousy," she asked, "or anger? Whichever it be I have not lost my power; a man moved enough to be angry is a man still in one's power. I can use him still and make better use than with that egotistic coxcomb Elliot."

"You wonder at my asking for you, Mr. Gray—Trajan—I love that name, that—that it was once my privilege to—"

"Let us forego reminiscences, if you please, Miss Carnot; you have some business with me?"

"Oh, Trajan, this is not like the confiding, noble man I knew—I—I—"

"Miss Carnot, I assure you I can not consent to meet you for such talk as this. I must beg you to avoid it. It is an injustice to yourself and dishonor to me. There is no past betwixt us; no future upon which that past can have the influence even of a cloud. It is as completely obliterated as if it had never been!" She laughed a low musical laugh, shrugged her pretty shoulders until the lace buried the lovely face in a Vandyke setting of dainty light and shade.

"*Très bien*, obdurate; *voici*, my mission, my servant Céleste stole a packet of letters, containing correspondence carried on by Jules and my father with Pietri, relative to some

scrape Jules had fallen into. That packet was recovered by an Englishman impressed by the commune in the same troop with my brother-in-law, a Mr. Gibson, who lost sight of Lafayette. He tells me he gave you the packet in Roquette. Have you them?"

"I will send the man who has them to you; they were given to Philip, not to me."

"To Philip!" with a palpitation of relief, as when a clap of thunder startles one at an open window and he realizes that the lightning ball has struck far off.

"Is this all?" and he moves toward the door. She rises and comes to him. Her wicked sorceress eyes are searching his face; her breath, the incense of passion and seduction, fills the narrow space with an odor of damnable desire. She holds out the shapeliest little hand, a diamond glistening like a star in the dim light of the room.

"It is the end, if you like, Trajan; I had something else to say to you if you wished it; but it is too late now, isn't it?"

"Yes, it is too late; it was too late a year ago."

She starts and the brown and crimson turn to ghastliness in her round cheeks; for the first time in her career she found her arts met with indifference, disdain.

"Then this is the end?" she whispered.

"This is the end, good-by." He turned bowing, with no proffer of the hand, and when Philip entered a minute later she was looking out of the window, a lace handkerchief limp and moist in her hand.

To the great surprise of the ladies Philip entering the breakfast-room a half hour later, made Theo's apologies; she had seen her brother passing and had hastened to catch him, without stopping to make her adieux.

"God be praised, that's the last of Jezebel," exclaimed Kate, with startling fervor.

"Good Heavens, Kate, what an inveterate hater you are," says Mrs. Arden, with benign surprise. "I'm sure Theo is

delightful. I don't know what we should have done without her since we came to Paris."

"I think we might have managed to exist vera weel," retorts the blood of Knox, slyly eying the abstracted Elliot, reading to Bella with the book upside down, unless the title on the back belied the letter-press within.

Here the manuscripts from which this writer has taken the woof of this history come to an end. But from Kate, who knows every thing, devoted as she is to the evangelizing of the world, I am enabled to trace all the persons who have helped or hurt the fortunes of our friends. Réné Belcour is at the head of a penny journal with a million circulation in Paris. He supported Gambetta in his victorious combat with MacMahon in 1877, and refused the ministry of Public Instruction when the dictator became Prime Minister. The funds to buy the journal which has made the kind fellow prosperous, were put at his disposition in a polite note from the great Rothschild, who refused to divulge the name of the unknown benefactor unless the enterprise proved a success, and then Réné learned that he was co-proprietor with Arden and Kent. La Baronne Pleinevide made such an excellent impression on the impulsive lady of Yahoo Gulch, that when Antoine came to them in London, covered with glory and scars, she never gave Jeptha a moment's peace until Amanda laid her large hands to the heart of the big guardsman and stilled its tumult. They are settled in Paris, near the Great House of the Grovels, now inhabited by the Prince d'Amboise and his charming princess Theo, who dazzles Paris with her costumes and equipages.

Lafayette acted with western generosity, so soon as Jules confided the situation to that impulsive kinsman. No question of money should stand between his little sister-in-law and such an alliance. She was given the great house in the

Rue de Roi Rome and a sixth interest in the Ivanhoe lode. The prince also was made a partner in that mine of wealth and elected on the Board of Directors to exploit it in Europe. Theo's influence with the Bellechasse procured the prince the proffer of the premiership in 1879, but the success of the Republicans and the timidity of the marshal, warned him to fly the failing cause of monarchy. Through Jules Carnot he became the intimate of Gambetta, who proffered him the embassy to Russia, during his short lived ministry.

Theo, foreseeing Gambetta's brief tenure of power, prevailed upon him to refuse the distinction. He stood for one of the royalist departments, where his family château stands, and defeated the communist candidate in 1878, and is regarded as the future premier, whenever the Count de Paris comes to the throne. La Baronne lives in her châlet at Meaux, where the honest Amanda often remains weeks at a time with her little boy Antoine, very sad and tearful, because the big Antoine passes all his time with opera dancers or in the clubs, scattering the treasures of Yahoo Gulch. The dowager consoles the poor foreign wife in French fashion, and the sore heart of Amanda settles itself on her little boy. Jules has become an under secretary of State and is thought to be growing rich. He is still the favored in royalist as well as Republican *salons*, and it is rumored he is to marry the rich Miss de la Flêche, who has become reconciled to her ancient friend the Princess d'Amboise.

But it is of the little commune on the banks of the Hudson that Kate loves to talk. Within a few hours of New York the Ardens and Grays live in villa-like edifices, which all who pass stop to admire. They were devised by Trajan and executed by one of his old *camarades* in the Beaux Arts. In Trajan's Villa, where Bella—now Bella Arden—sometimes comes with the bonne and little Edith, her daughter, there is a wonderful attic studio, so like the Rue Dragon, that if it were not for the little boys and girls

that share it as a playroom with Trip and Betty, you would swear it was honest Madame Agay's *cinquième.* When Bella brings little Edith, Mistress Edith Gray compares Elliot's first born with Trajan's black-eyed boy, and the two mothers make their plans and tell how the baby Edith and baby Trajan are to marry as their fathers did before them!

Philip and his little boy Amédée abide in the pretty cottage you see in the Arden grounds. Madame Blaye is the housekeeper and Kate is its mistress, devoting herself to eradicating the seeds of idolatry from the young papist's mind, an effort which, much to Philip's amusement, is not so successful as the descendant of Knox confidently imagines. For Madame Blaye is as stout for mother church as Kate for the conventicle, and the little Amédée passes many an hour with the small Blayes in the seductive forms of the Roman church —occasionally smuggled into the village chapel, when Kate is off her guard.

Trajan has grown a little stouter and irremediably good humored. In New York, one day, with Edith on his arm, who should he come upon in the Central Park art-gallery but the Princess Theo and her noble spouse. Theo saw them first, and carrying the prince with her, came up with gay recognition. The gentle Edith shrank away trembling, but Trajan with humorous composure cordially shook the proffered hand of the princess and her husband's. They were on a tour through the country, to wind up with a visit at Napoleonville, where the prince was to examine his Gulch interests, she informed them in a rattling humorous way that struck Mistress Edith dumb. The prince too was affably cordial and declared to Trajan that he thought of demanding a commission on his pictures in Paris, as Theo had made him the vogue by giving the portrait he had painted of her the place of honor in the palace on the Rue de Roi de Rome, and talked of his genius so incessantly that every one who bought pictures must possess a Gray in the collection! When the prince mentioned "commission,"

Theo blushed divinely, and the party separated with the politest possible *au revoir*, Theo insisting that Edith must call on her at the "Clarendon."

What more is there to tell? If you were to ask Kate, she would have as much again as you have read in these pages. But the trials and uncertainties are done, and who has patience to follow the tiresome felicities of Darby and Joan? Trajan is still a believer in the commune creed and is engaged in a great work which is to open the eyes of the world on that much abused system—but Elliot laughs slyly when he is asked to listen to the tumultuous rhetoric of the enthusiast as he elaborates each chapter, and the last heard of the manuscript, the first volume was encountering polite refusals and inappreciation from those hard-hearted allies of oligarchic greed, the publishers.

And so the curtain doesn't go down, but the scene fades with the faint odor of orange blossoms and the echo of the marriage bells that chime away the vicissitudes of the strangely united destinies; and as the shadowy forms that have piped and played, danced and caroled, sighed and wept, sinned and repented, fade into the busy world of fancy, the author bids them a regretful good-by; he bespeaks them indulgence from the gentle reader, whose patience they have tried: those who have condemned as well as those who have applauded and approved, their waywardness, weakness, their virtues and constancy, and with this prayer he bids the kind reader an affectionate farewell.

THE END.

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